

Agnieszka Halemba

Negotiating Marian Apparitions

The Politics of Religion in Transcarpathian Ukraine

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The Politics of Religion in Transcarpathian Ukraine

AGNIESZKA HALEMBA



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To the Memory of Barbara and Inna

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A Note on Transliteration

As this work is not linguistic in nature, I have decided to sacrifice a bit of accuracy in transliteration to facilitate reading. I have used a simplified version of the Library of Congress system for transliterating terms and names from Ukrainian and other Slavic languages normally rendered in Cyrillic. It is simplified in the sense that I have not used the ligature to indicate single letters that require a pair of letters for accurate transliteration in the Latin alphabet (for example, the Ukrainian letter *ц* should, according to the Library of Congress table, be rendered *ts*, whereas I have simply written *ts*). I have also dispensed with the diacritical marks that distinguish the Ukrainian letters *і*, *ї*, and *й* from one another, and have simply represented all three with the letter *i*. However, for the sake of accuracy, I do follow the convention of using an apostrophe (') to represent the "soft sign" (ь). This may be visually confusing to readers, especially when it comes at the end of a word and therefore looks as if it could indicate possession or an incomplete contraction.



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

On August 27, 2002, Marianka and Olenka, nine and ten years old at the time, went to fetch water from a spring in a meadow called Dzhublyk, located between two Transcarpathian villages, Nyzhnie Bolotne and Vil'khivka. The first edition of a booklet officially published by the pilgrimage site that emerged shortly after this event described the first sighting as follows:

When one of them bent to scoop out some water, the second one cried with wonderment, "Look, is there someone behind you?" There, for the first time, they saw the most beautiful white Lady. She was standing on a cloud, embellished with wonderful blossoms, that did not touch the ground. The children got scared. They even had an eerie suspicion that it might have been some kind of sorceress (*vorozhka*). They hastily went home, but the Lady was floating behind them on the cloud all the way to their yards.

At home the children spoke about the meeting, but their parents did not believe them and rebuked them, saying that they read too many strange books and, because of that, were deluded and could imagine anything. Even so, the father of one of the girls, a [Greek Catholic] priest, Father Petro, a serious and demanding person, told them, "If you see this person on the cloud again, make the sign of the cross on yourself and on her." (Tsyipesh 2002: 6–7)

The booklet continues with a description of the next meeting with the "person on the cloud," that happened the same evening. The Lady followed the girls to the kindergarten, where they went to pick up Olenka's little sister. Following the priest's advice, the girls made the sign of the cross, but the Lady just smiled in response and returned the same sign. This openness and friendliness encouraged the girls to ask the Lady what her name was. They received two answers that supplemented each other: one girl was told that the Lady was the

Most Holy Virgin; the other that she was the Purest Virgin Mary (Tsyipesh 2002: 8). According to the official narrative presented in the booklets that, in changed and amended editions, have been published by the site managers almost every year since 2002, since that day the site of the apparition started to establish itself and quickly grew in popularity (Tsyipesh 2002, 2002–2003a, 2002–2003b, 2006, 2010). People started to gather there; the auxiliary bishop, Ivan Marhitych, came to the site and interviewed the girls; and on August 31 the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated next to the Dzhublyk spring.

This book concerns the politics of religion as expressed through apparitional experiences. My argument is built around the response of the Virgin Mary to a question that was posed to her by the visionaries on September 1, 2002 about the purpose of her visit. The Virgin Mary responded that she had come to help. After being asked what kind of help she had in mind, she said, “I want to help restore the authority (*vidnovyty avtorytet*) of the priests among the people, to unite the divided people and to unite the Church” (Tsyipesh 2002: 15). This response has inspired me to ask the following questions: Can the Virgin Mary’s appearances and her words to the visionaries at Dzhublyk help us understand the local religious situation better? Why has she decided to focus on the authority of priests and the unity of people and the church? Are those issues particularly problematic in contemporary Transcarpathia? Is the Virgin Mary speaking on someone’s behalf, or is she indicating some present challenges that explicitly or implicitly preoccupy the local people? On the other hand, can the Dzhublyk apparitions tell us anything new and interesting about the ways in which religion is present in the contemporary world? Can they help us to understand phenomena that reach beyond the local Transcarpathian, Ukrainian or even post-Soviet context?

Although the messages of the Virgin Mary structure my work, this book is not an exercise in analyzing visions. My aim is, in part, to understand the social significance of Dzhublyk and the church’s efforts to manage the apparitions and the site. Most importantly however, the apparition site was for me an entry point into the field and figured prominently in the interviews conducted during my research. I used it mostly to generate research questions that went beyond the apparitional phenomena themselves. On the one hand, the apparitions and the pilgrimage site that has grown up around them provide insights into the present position of Transcarpathia in regional, Ukraine-wide, and European struggles for identity and political belonging. The way in which the site has been conceived and managed raises questions

concerning the fate of religious communities during and after socialism, the significance of national projects for religious organizations, and the politics of religious management in a situation where local religious commitments are relatively strong and religious organizations are relatively weak. This last situation is not limited to the post-Soviet region, as was noted repeatedly throughout secularization debates, where one aspect of the secularization process was described as privatisation of religion (cf. Casanova 1994). Still, there is a specific local twist here, namely that the religious organizations in Transcarpathia aspire for a much stronger position than they have at present and actively try to rechannel religious commitments towards their organizational structures. More specifically, the incidents at Dzhublyk have enabled me to understand better the position of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia in relation to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, as well as in relation to such phenomena as the Ruthenian/Rusyn movement,¹ struggles for Ukrainian statehood and national unity and, more generally, the significance of the idea of “unity” (*iednist*) among the local population. The answers to those questions contribute to the ethnography and history of this particular region and the postsocialist world in general.

On the other hand, the changing status of the apparition site over the years of my research has allowed me to ask and investigate questions concerning authority, legitimacy, and power in religious organizations and institutions that go beyond any regional interest. In my opinion, terms such as institution, organization, and related concepts are used in the social sciences in ways that are imprecise and confusing. I argue that it is useful to clearly distinguish, on an analytical level, religious institutions from religious organizations. Although the apparitions of the Virgin Mary have for many authors been an incentive to return to the notion of experience as the basis of religion (Christian and Klaniczay 2009; Orsi 2008), in this work I speak rather about the significance of apparitions understood within institutionalized and organizational religion—which two terms I clearly separate in my analysis. Moreover, in this work I do not treat the messages of the Virgin Mary of Dzhublyk as an example of generic

¹ The terms “Ruthenian” and “Rusyn” are used in many English-language works interchangeably (Magocsi and Pop 2002; Pasička 2015). They usually refer to the inhabitants of the Carpathian Mountains and neighbouring regions as well as their descendants, whose identity formation vis-à-vis the respective nation-states (Poland, Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania) display a wide array of forms. I shall return to the history and significance of this movement in chapters 2 and 3.

apparitional discourse, often dismissed as a repetitive and dull call to prayer and penance and a warning against Satan's power, and therefore not deserving of much scientific attention (Cavallin 2007). Instead, the main messages of the Virgin Mary are taken as indications of the directions in which the study of contemporary processes taking place in the religious life of Transcarpathia, the Catholic Church and, more generally, Christianity may move. One important conclusion of this book is that the organizational dimensions of religious life are both extremely significant and still understudied in anthropology.

In the remaining part of this introductory chapter, I first outline my use of the terms experience, social institution, and organization as analytical concepts and explain why this analytical vocabulary is particularly appropriate for the study of religion in postsocialist regions and why this differentiation of terms is useful in studies concerning religion in general. I also introduce my methodology and my field site.

Religious Experiences, Institutions, and Organizations

In the social sciences, the terms "organization" and "institution" are used in many different contexts and in many diverse, often contradictory ways. They are also often used almost interchangeably. This of course reflects the everyday usage of the terms, whereby the Catholic Church, for example, can be called either an institution or an organization, without much (if any) difference in the mind of the speaker. In this study, I do not attempt to present a complex theoretical argument concerning the nature of organizations and/or institutions—my aims are more modest and chiefly methodological. I believe that it is extremely important to differentiate in terms of analytical language between institution and organization, at least in the study of religion, because the processes of interaction between religious institutions and religious organizations generate some of the most important and pregnant questions concerning the ways in which religion is present in human life. On the one hand, this would appear to be a well-explored avenue, already paved by such thinkers as Max Weber and his work on routinization (1968), Richard Niebuhr (2005[1929]) and Ernst Troeltsch (1992[1912]), who started a line of sociological research on church-sect transformations (*see* Stark and Bainbridge 1979, 1980), and Pierre Bourdieu, who focused on competition for power in the religious field (Bourdieu 1991; Furseth 2009; Rey 2007). On the other hand, I believe

that there is still a need for ethnographically informed studies that concern transformations among the three main ways in which the religious has been identified as an aspect of human life in academic works: as experiences, as institutions, and as organizations. Although these analytically discernible aspects are actually interlinked and bundled in ways that are crucial for understanding the presence of religion in human life, terminological precision is, in my opinion, a prerequisite for analysis and especially for investigations into how these three levels of religious phenomena interact with each other. The apparitions of the Virgin Mary strike me as an excellent entrée into such investigations: they are based (or are declared to be based²) on the religious experiences of individuals, and they in turn generate such experiences in others; they interact with institutional patterns and/or are subjects of often very rapid institutionalization; they are also of interest to religious organizations, as they mostly take place within the Catholic Church, a centralized and hierarchical religious organization.

However, my ethnography focuses on the interaction between religious institutions and what I am calling “organizational embracement,” with significantly less space devoted to experiences. In my opinion, the study of religious experiences and their transformations through institutionalization and organizational embracement requires much stronger interdisciplinary approach than I could follow throughout this research. Although there are strong movements both in social anthropology of religion, as well as in the cognitive science of religion, that aim at studying religious experiences, there is still a basic problem of locating experience and studying experience without using various research methods from the very first stages of a given research project. On the other hand, the organizational aspects of religion are in my opinion understudied through standard anthropological methods and, at the same time,

² As I hope will become clear from this book, I do not question the experiences of people who report visions, locutions, and the like. The parenthetical comment above does suggest, however, that a particular person's immediate experience of a given phenomenon is not a necessary condition either for institutionalization or for organizational embracement in the religious realm. The levels of experience, institution, and organization are intertwined, but that does not mean that an experience has to first reside on an individual level to be effective on the institutional and organizational levels. As I demonstrate later in this introduction, there can be an institutionalization of experience that cannot be clearly located on an experiential level (an experience that was “not there”); moreover, sometimes the experience can result from institutionalization or even organizational embracement.

accessible through them. Still, in order to understand the methodological contribution this book makes, it is necessary to delineate briefly all three aspects of my analytical approach to religion.

In her book, *Religious Experience Reconsidered. A Building Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things*, Ann Taves (2009) follows an approach that is similar in some important respects to those advocated in contemporary mainstream cognitive studies of religion, which do not treat religion as a unified whole, and deem attempts to define religion in this way as futile (Barrett and Lanmann 2008; Boyer 1994, 2003). As Justin Barrett writes, “[R]ather than specify what religion is and try to explain it in whole, scholars in this field [cognitive studies] have generally chosen to approach ‘religion’ in an incremental, piecemeal fashion, identifying human thought and behavioral patterns that might count as ‘religious’ and then trying to explain why those patterns are cross-culturally recurrent” (2007: 1). Most studies of religion in this field deal with patterns of thought and behavior that in some contexts can be classified as “religious”; the important point, however, is that there is nothing intrinsically “religious” about them.

However, cognitive studies of religion are only concerned to a very limited extent with how exactly some experiences are deemed religious in specific social contexts. They are, rather, interested in general, presumably universal, cognitive mechanisms that apparently enable the emergence of concepts, behaviors, and experiences that can be, under specific circumstances, deemed religious. What links these approaches with works of scholars such as Ann Taves is the explicit assertion that there is no religious experience *sui generis*, which is in opposition to works of such thinkers as Rudolph Otto (1923), Gerardus van der Leeuw (1938), and Mircea Eliade (1961), for whom characterizing the features of specifically religious experiences was a main concern. The cognitive approach can be seen as a return to the initial interpretations of William James’s classic work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (2009[1902]), in which James tried to explain religious experience in psychological terms, while leaving open the possibility that it might indicate something more, something transcendental (Taves 2009: 4–5). Taves writes that William James’s monumental work on religious experience has been misinterpreted and appropriated as if he were writing about religious experience *sui generis*, although what he actually did was privilege experiences (without qualification), understood as sudden, discrete, authenticating moments, as the basis of religious institutions, practices, and doctrines (Taves 2009: 5).

For example, an experience that could be interpreted as religious on a social level but has nothing intrinsically religious about it could be understood in the cognitive science of religion as linked to the operation of the so-called hyper-sensitive agency detection device (HADD). In a work considered to be one of the first attempts at introducing cognitive mechanisms into the contemporary anthropology of religion, Stewart Guthrie argued that humans have a perceptual inclination to recognize agents (in his theory these are human-like agents) in their environment. He argued for an evolved bias to over-detect evidence of the presence of agents, because if a person mistakenly takes, for example, the sound of the wind or of a breaking branch as a sign of the presence of an agent, this false recognition is less costly in terms of survival than failing to detect the actual presence of (potentially dangerous) agents such as animal predators (Guthrie 1980, 1995). HADD is the name given to the cognitive system responsible for such over-detection of agents (Barrett 2000, 2007). What is important for the present argument is a claim expressed in cognitive studies of religion that the mechanism responsible for the over-detection of agency can be (but does not have to be) interpreted in religious terms—under some conditions it can be postulated that this agency we detect stems from a supernatural agent.

Still, how does it happen that some activations of HADD lead to religious interpretations, while others do not? Here the cognitive studies of religion so far cease to be of much help. The process of ascribing “religiousness” to a particular experience is, on the other hand, the main concern of the aforementioned work by Ann Taves, who says that “If we want to understand how anything at all, including experience, *becomes* religious, we need to turn our attention to the processes whereby people sometimes ascribe special characteristics to things that we (as scholars) associate with terms such as ‘religious,’ ‘magical,’ ‘mystical,’ ‘spiritual,’ et cetera” (2009: 8). Her own answer is, in my opinion, straightforwardly Durkheimian—she starts from the assertion that “religious” refers primarily to phenomena deemed “special,” “set apart,” and “exceptional” (Taves 2009: 26–48), which corresponds to Durkheim’s definition of religion as a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is, things set apart and forbidden” (Durkheim 2008[1912]: 47). What she calls a “simple ascription,” in which some event is set apart as special, should be analytically separated from a “composite ascription,” in which “simple ascriptions are incorporated into complex formations, such as those that scholars and others designate as ‘spiritualities’ or ‘religions’” (Taves 2009: 9).

In my reading of Taves, the very process of attributing “specialness” to something (a “thing” is not necessarily an object; it can be an event, a phenomenon, or a process) is a social process. She says that the “special things” most likely to be set apart are those that are either considered ideal (they seem perfect or complete) or anomalous (strange and unusual) (Taves 2009: 36–38). Still, setting them apart as “special” does not make them religious. “Religiousness” is an attribution that appears on the next level of analysis, which looks at how the “special things” are recognized socially and, what is more important, how “special paths”—that is, “sets of practices that individuals or groups view as effective in attaining goals associated with special things”—are built (2009: 47). This process can be called the institutionalization of religion, if we understand social institutions as relatively stable social mechanisms patterning human behavior. Examples of such institutions would include marriage, friendship, witchcraft, shamanic practices, and many others. Social institutions are, however, most often explicitly demarcated from the flow of everyday life and from each other, not by the people who structure their lives according to their patterning mechanisms, but by external observers—foremost among them social scientists trying to describe recurrences in human behavior. This is the basis of the critique of concepts referring to particular social institutions that appear in social anthropology and related disciplines—calling some pattern “kinship” or “religion” is, according to such critiques, a way of effectively creating a social institution by abstracting some aspect of behavior from the flow of everyday life (*see*, for example, Atkinson 1992; Schneider 1955, 1972).

Although such critiques are useful in warning against the possibility of compartmentalizing social life and separating aspects that are in practice intertwined, if we remember that “institution” is an analytical concept and not an attempt to define social facts ontologically, then we can productively retain it for analytical purposes. In the case of studies of religion, the institutionalization of religion and the development of religious institutions would refer to socially established ways of dealing with special things or, to use Taves’s terminology, of building “special paths.” Institutionalization therefore is a process of reproduction, repetition, and stabilization of social action (Berger and Luckmann 1967). Importantly, in terms of religious institutions, on this level religious activity does not require that each person have the immediate experience of the “special things”—people can vicariously experience “special things” through following “special paths.” This is the level on which most anthropological studies of religion have been located to date—they focus on

socially widespread and enacted ways of understanding the special things that can be, under some conditions, called religion, although they do not have to be understood locally as constituting a clearly delineated area of life. To give just one example, the Siberian Yukaghirs usually follow a number of rituals before hunting directed at spiritual beings. People roughly know what to do in such instances, but they perceive these rituals as an integral part of the hunting process (which is conceived as a kind of interaction between various kinds of persons inhabiting the tundra—humans, animals, spirits), and not as a special, separated “religious” area of their lives (Willerslev 2004). Because those rituals patterns (“special paths”) are fairly stable, their religious life can be analyzed as institutionalized at least to some extent.

For the purposes of this study, the most crucial distinction is one between religious institution and religious organization, as well as “institutionalization” and what I call “organizational embracement,” for it is at the crossroads of these latter two concepts that my approach to the apparitions at Dzhublyk is situated. The basic and most important difference between institution and organization is, in my understanding, related to the respective level of recognition of a given pattern of social behavior as separate from other aspects of life. Organizations are here understood as mechanisms structuring social action that are clearly identifiable for the involved actors and within which and through which particular norms of action are clearly and explicitly defined and can be enacted in practice. These features of organizations were noted by David Gellner and Eric Hirsch, who wrote that organizations are many and various, but they all have explicit rules, a division of labor, and aims that involve acting on or changing everyday life (2001: 2). This does not mean, however, that all actors taking part in organized activity can at any point explicitly express all the rules of a given organization. Still, those who act on behalf of a given organization have a feeling that behind their actions stands a clearly definable, bounded entity that can be invoked and named. Organizations are perceived as agents. Although anthropologists would be quick to point out that organizations are arenas of intense differentiation, struggles, networking, alliance formation, and so on, it is important to note that they are perceived locally as if they were actors—the university, the church, the school—are talked about as if they were giving opinions, issuing decrees, hiring and firing, involving themselves in public issues, and so on. Moreover, organizations are objectified not primarily by researchers, but by the people involved in their operation. This is the basic difference between institutions and organizations,

at least in the religious sphere: both are complex patterns of human behavior, arenas in which negotiations and redefinitions of roles and goals take place, but organizations are both internally and externally clearly objectified, whereas institutions are not. Organizations and institutions both regulate social experiences and action. However, while institutional rules are largely implicit and have to be extracted by a researcher from actions and people's accounts, organizational rules are explicitly defined and often even codified in writing. This does not presume that all actions undertaken within or in relation to an organization are always shaped according to these explicit rules. On the contrary, those rules can be subverted, challenged, or ignored by various actors—in fact, this is one of the ways in which social institutions interact with and challenge organizations. Organizations can also produce institutions when, for example, their presence and activity in a given region induces people to engage in certain activities and types of behavior, even though these are not explicitly stipulated by the organization's rules. I return to this issue in my discussion of the establishment of explicit rules of adjudication of miracles and apparitions not primarily as a strategy of control on the part of a dominant organization, but as a process of creating an institution that enables all involved parties to negotiate their positions.

The most important feature of organizations in this understanding is that they are perceived by social actors as entities that can act as if they were persons. One says the school, the state, or the church undertook this or that action. To return to the example of the Yukaghir hunters, one would say that the organizational aspect starts to have influence on their religious life, if, in a discussion concerning the practicalities of conducting this or that ritual, an authority of some formal body was evoked—for example, one would be advised to carry out a particular ritualized action, because the local council of shamans recommends to perform a ritual in a given way. Of course the ethnography usually shows how this or that action is the result not of abstract organizational rules, but an effect of complex actions of concrete people under particular circumstances. Nevertheless, the existence of organizations and their explicit rules can always be used in arguments concerning a particular course of action. A striking feature of many arguments that I encountered during my research was the assertion that the Catholic Church supports this or that option. In discussions concerning particular social arrangements that were supported or challenged by some actors, the presumed benefit to the church or the rules of the church were often invoked as an irresistible argument, often bringing

the discussion to an abrupt conclusion. Moreover, organizations are unlike social institutions because they always involve conscious monitoring and control of the relationship between means and ends on a fairly regular basis. Such monitoring and control implies a conscious disciplinary process whereby organizational leaders adapt internal structures to their perception of external conditions (Morgan 1990:5)

Organizations and institutions receive most attention in economics and management studies, although also in those disciplines there is no agreement concerning the way in which the terms are used. Douglas North wrote that organizations “are made up of groups of individuals bound together by some common purpose” (1994: 361). This actually is a highly problematic assumption. It is quite obvious that individual members of organizations not only may have very different visions of what the organization’s goals are, they may also be uninterested in the fulfillment of these goals at all, even if the goals are known to them. What is the “common purpose,” for example, of the members of a church? Individual salvation? Growth of the organization? Personal gain? Assistance to fellow believers? Even the first one cannot be taken for granted, taking into account a small but growing body of literature on belonging without believing, which indicates that belonging to a religious organization can be seen as a matter of supporting national or cultural heritage and may have nothing to do, from the point of view of the members, with personal religious beliefs or eschatological expectations (Caldwell 2005; McBrien and Pelkmans 2008; Zuckerman 2008).

The considerable confusion in the ways in which the analytical terms “institution” and “organization” are used stems partly from the everyday usage of the terms, but also from the complex relations between institutions and organizations encountered in the research process. Some understand organization as a special kind of social institution (Hodgson 2006). Some talk about social institutions that are organizations, or institutions that are systems of organizations (Miller 2012). Others discuss organizational culture as influenced by social institutions (Rao and Kelleher 2003), while still others talk about institutionalization within organizations (Zucker 1987). W. Richard Scott (2008: 19) points out that social institutions were identified and analyzed very early on by social scientists, and were a focus of the work of Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, and other classic thinkers and generations of subsequent scholars. Despite differences in approach, it can be said that they all focused on institutions as forms of social interaction that are

produced, reproduced, and come to evoke similar meanings in oneself and others (Scott 2008: 16). Organizations and their operation, on the other hand, captured the attention of researchers much later, in the late 1930s and 1940s, the period that is generally considered the beginning of organizational studies (Scott 2008: 19).

In anthropology, the interest in organizations is even more recent and fairly specific. David Gellner and Eric Hirsch write that anthropologists until quite recently tended to work in societies where there is “plenty of social organization but few or no organizations” (2001: 3). Even in this short sentence there is a very simple but disturbing and, in my opinion, unnecessary confusion between institution and organization steaming from a double meaning given in this quotation to “organization.” What those authors mean, using the language I propose, is that in societies that anthropologists have traditionally studied there were few organizations understood as explicit systems of managing social life recognized by people as agents, but plenty of institutions, that is, ways in which social life was implicitly regulated. Of course this was an illusion, as the authors themselves remark—organizations such as the church, the school, and the hospital were very much present even in the most exotic locations where anthropologists worked. Still, the organizations were rather marginalized in these studies, as they were understood as foreign introductions, not of prime concern to anthropologists interested in the specific and the local. Using the example of work by Jean and John Comaroff (1991, 1999), Joel Robbins (2007) showed how Christianity, introduced into South Africa by a specific religious organization, was removed from the focus of anthropological research through an insistence on the ways in which missionary efforts were challenged locally. According to Robbins, the Comaroffs removed from the center of anthropological attention the experience of change in the lives of the converted, as if the evident presence of religious organization in this region and formal access to this organization among the local population did not have much to do with changes in local religious institutions, and even less with the experiences of the people concerned. He phrased his critique in terms of an anthropological preoccupation with continuity and the problem that anthropology has with sudden change (rupture), which, according to him, may be regarded as one of the characteristic features of Christianity. Although the notion that rupture is a general characteristic of Christianity was immediately challenged by a number of studies concerning Catholic and Orthodox Christianity (Lester 2003, 2005; Naumescu 2008b, 2011, 2012), the

old observation that ethnographic writing is a process of creating reality rather than mirroring it (Clifford and Marcus 1986) remains unchallenged, as does the marginalization of Christianity in anthropology until fairly recently, especially in its organizational aspect. I believe that organizations sometimes disappear from anthropological studies because anthropologists, with their specific research methods and interests, focus mostly on everyday interactions, on the local and, even more importantly, on the voices of those who are not in positions of power (Stoczkowski 2008). Susan Wright (1994: 20, quoted in Jiménez 2007) wrote that power and its institutions (and again, I would say organizations) make anthropologists uncomfortable, as they are perceived as top-down and even oppressive.

There is of course an anthropology of organizations (Jiménez 2007; Wright 1994), as well as organizational scholars who eagerly identify the anthropological influences on their work (Czarniawska 2010, 2012; Kostera 2003). In a recent article Barbara Czarniawska (2012) traces the influence of anthropology on her and her fellow organizational scholars. Interestingly, she points out that the initial inspiration that organizational studies took from anthropology was not related to research questions, but rather to methodology, particularly ethnography understood as following closely what people actually do, while participating in organizational activities—as managers, teachers, or industrial workers. She points out that those anthropological inspirations led her to treat “organizations’ as epiphenomena: they are one of the products of an action net that may spread wider and further than any organization” (2012: 127). She ultimately conceptualizes organizations as nets of collective action, where the actual ways in which people deal with given problems are more important than explicit rules, organizational boundaries, or hierarchies. Such an approach sounds similar to what dominates studies of organizations in anthropology, where the focus of the study is not the organization or even the way in which it is perceived, but the people within organizations—their dealings, strategies, and negotiations. To paraphrase Clifford Geertz (1973), anthropologists do not study organizations; anthropologists study in organizations. If this is indeed the case, are they justified in doing so?

Geoffrey Hodgson writes that “endless disputes over the definitions of key terms such as institution and organization have led some writers to give up matters of definition and to propose getting down somehow to practical matters instead. But it is not possible to carry out any empirical or theoretical analysis of how institutions or organizations work without having some

adequate conception of what an institution or an organization is" (Hodgson 2006: 1). This is a good starting point for me to state clearly what I have in mind concerning institution and organization as analytical terms. On the surface, it would seem that I agree with Hodgson. However, in the remainder of his article he tries to define institutions as a broader category of social phenomena of which organizations are a subset. This is a very different approach from mine. Rather than treating organizations as special kinds of institutions (Hodgson 2006: 18), I treat both terms as heuristic devices that help me understand and analyze what happens when socially established ways of acting and thinking interact with explicitly established organizations perceived by local actors as agents in a given field. I am not claiming that organizations *are* agents; I am only going along with local epistemology that describes them as such.

Hodgson also warns that one should not carry conclusions concerning the functioning of one kind of institution or organization to another (2006). I think that is reasonable advice, and I therefore would like to emphasize that I am talking only about institutions and organizations concerned with "special things" or experiences deemed religious. All that has been said above is more an attempt to bring together the long-standing debates on religious experience, the social significance of religion, and organizational studies, which are often kept separate. Taking into account the work done within the anthropology of organizations on the negotiation of meaning, multivocality, agency, and organizational change, my approach may seem quite conservative, looking at organizations as agents, albeit from the perspective of local observers and participants. I want to stress that the view I present is not a theory of what organizations or institutions are, but rather an analytical and to some extent also methodological attempt to approach religious life in a holistic, but structured, way that at the same time corresponds to the perceptions of people on the ground. What may seem at first sight to be isolating organizations from the lives of people by emphasizing their rules and boundaries is actually an attempt to bring organizations closer to their actual experience as, for example, when people consider the church an important agent. In the chapters that follow I show the internal complexities of the Catholic Church as an organization, but this complexity does not diminish the importance of the church as a perceived unity in the eyes of its clerical and lay members. Therefore, if I comment for example on the role the Vatican plays in the life of believers, I am referring rather to their *perception* of the Vatican as an authoritative body that for a

Catholic differentiates proper from improper behavior, than to the real-life activities of the Vatican functionaries.³

Interestingly, in the mainstream anthropology of Christianity that has developed in recent years mostly on the basis of research on neo-Protestant movements, especially Pentecostalism, interest in the organizational aspects of religious practice is limited; such issues as the nature of language, literacy, materiality and semiotics, bodily practices, and religious learning have been developed instead (Cannell 2006; Engelke and Tomlinson 2006; Keane 2007; Meyer 2010, 2011; Tomlinson 2012). In recent works that do follow the call to place Christianity at the center of anthropological attention and that focus on Catholicism, the organizational aspect is much more present. For example, both Anna Corwin (2012) and Richard Irvine (2010a) trace the impact of organizational changes within the Catholic Church on the personal prayers and experiences of nuns and monks. As Corwin writes, “The history of the Church as an institution [*sic*] has profoundly affected the ways in which the nuns experience their bodies as they age....As prayer books were edited, and as local ideologies of the divine changed with them, Catholic nuns across the country had the opportunity to reshape their own relationship with God. The change can be seen as coming both from the ‘top down’ and the ‘bottom up’” (2012: 406). The influence of the organizational dimension of religious life is probably most obvious in the Catholic Church, which explicitly links church hierarchy and organizational structures with sacredness. Nevertheless, I believe that the organizational aspects are extremely important in the ethnographic study of religion outside the Catholic context as well, as I demonstrate below on the basis of an example from my previous research.

I agree with Paul DiMaggio who, in a brief article on the relevance of organizational theory to the study of religion (1998), says that one of the most important recommendations stemming from neo-institutional approaches to the study of religion is the suggestion that researchers should pay attention to the regulatory environment in which religion operates. If some more general insights from neo-institutionalism that underline the ways in which envi-

³ I am grateful to William A. Christian Jr. for pointing out to me the discrepancy between the perception of the Vatican activities on the ground as well as the impression the Vatican is happy to purvey, and the reality of the Vatican management practices that are mostly reactive, ad hoc and disorganized. It is very important to understand that the crucial characteristic of an organization in my approach is that it is *perceived* as a fairly unified agent and not that it actually acts in this way.

ronment (including the social and cultural environment) shapes the organizational processes were to become routine in ethnography-based anthropology, then DiMaggio's suggestion that studies of religion pay more attention to the formal regulations of religious life such as law, taxation, or sources of financing, along with rules of organizations, could provide fruitful pathways for future ethnographies. For example, DiMaggio (1998) writes that religious control regimes can be understood as varying along at least two dimensions: degree of hierarchical control and degree of congregational control. He describes Catholicism as high in hierarchical control and low in congregational control. As DiMaggio's article was conceived merely as speculation on the potential contribution of neo-institutional approaches to the study of religion and his example is hypothetical, it is not actually possible to argue with his theses. However, I find it interesting that as an indicator for a low degree of congregational control in the Catholic Church he chose the fact that the priests are not employed by the local community and can be recalled by the hierarchy. As I show in Chapter 4, the Greek Catholic Church in present-day Ukraine is an example of an organization that depends on a high level of hierarchical control, which is simultaneously faced with a state legal system that privileges congregational control, forcing, for example, local communities to arrange legal work contracts with their parish priests. I show how this legal arrangement influences religious life on the ground. DiMaggio stresses that the most interesting cases from the point of view of understanding operations of organizations would be those in which congregational and hierarchical control mechanisms have to interact. This is precisely the case of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia.

My work is an exploration of various theoretical approaches that could help us understand the relations among experiences, institutions, and organizations in the religious field. As the above quotes by Paul DiMaggio and Richard Scott suggest, further exploration of neo-institutionalism could provide not only methodological guidelines, but also theoretical inspiration, and could be fruitful for ethnography-based studies concerning religion. For example, Mike McMullen (1994) also applies insights from neo-institutional theory to studying religious organizations. He asks how religious organizations can become sources of institutions that mobilize parishioners' behavior. Institutions here are clearly differentiated analytically from organizations, at first sight in a way that seems different from my approach, but upon closer examination we see that the approaches are not so different. McMullen compares

the Roman Catholic Church with the United Church of Christ (UCC) in the United States, basing his argument on research in nineteen congregations in the Atlanta area that he uses as examples of two types of polities: episcopal and congregational. “Polities” in McMullen’s terms are the rules of ecclesiastical authority, dictating the ways in which church government operates. In his understanding, those rules are institutions structuring relations within the given church organizations. The Roman Catholic Church is an example of an episcopal polity, hierarchically structured and centralized around the authority of the Pope, legitimated by myths of apostolic successions and infallibility. The UCC is an example of a congregational polity, with a decentralized structure that secures autonomy on the local level—a local congregation can hire and fire ministers, discipline members, control finances, and even adopt creeds and statements of faith. This does not mean that the translocal or national organizational structure of this church does not exist—there is a national General Synod—nonetheless, the polity is legitimized by a myth of local congregational autonomy.

In his research, McMullen focused on the ways in which people are aware of the policies advanced by a given organization, using as examples documents concerning economic justice published by a Catholic bishop and by the General Synod of the UCC. According to McMullen, in the Catholic Church those who actively participated in church life (measured by attendance at services, activity in church-based groups, etc.) were more likely to know about policies generated at the higher level of church structure. Interestingly, in the UCC, such a correlation was not present—those who were active participants in church life on the local level did not know more about policies advocated by the General Synod than other church members. Instead, the knowledge of its policies was positively correlated with factors external to church-related activities, such as ethnicity and prior interest in social issues. McMullen explains this as a result of weak organizational connections between the local setting and the national denomination as a whole. The local UCC can be an island unto itself, possibly fostering a great deal of local participation, but remaining isolated from any activity on the national level. In the Catholic Church, there are channels through which information is disseminated. Therefore, participation equals knowledge about what happens at the higher levels of hierarchy.

Interestingly, McMullen describes his own conclusion as counterintuitive. He says that usually congregational polities are perceived as more “democratic,”

allowing for the free flow of information and facilitating members' knowledge. The research, however, does not support this expectation. He says that "the institutional myth of local church autonomy prevents mechanisms from being socially constructed to facilitate the movement of information between institutional levels, as well as the interest and motivation for even listening to what is said 'from on high'" (1994: 724). For the Catholic Church, on the other hand, the myth of episcopal polity has created for parishioners the motivation to be aware of church policy "exactly because they acknowledge as legitimate the authority of the episcopal hierarchy" (1994: 724).

In fact, McMullen to some extent collapses the myth of episcopal polity with actual practices of governance in the Catholic congregations he researched. The myth of hierarchical and centralized authority is for him a structuring principle—because of this myth, the organization actually develops channels to disseminate information from the national (and transnational) level to the local level, and because of this myth the members of particular congregations are interested in policies created and pursued beyond the local level. While the situation in Transcarpathia is more complex, the concepts employed by McMullen can still be helpful. In practice the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia is both congregational and episcopal, a result of the Soviet legacy and the legal situation of religious organizations in Ukraine. Because of these legal arrangements, local congregations can hire and fire their priests, control finances, and even decide on the form of ritual practice. At the same time, they are part of the Catholic Church, which is a centralized and hierarchical organization. My research shows that for most priests the myth of the church as an episcopal polity is very much valid and an important structuring principle, and it shapes the way in which they see the legitimate flows of authority. However, for many lay members of local congregations, acceptance of the church as an organization does not have to involve simultaneous acceptance of institutions promoted by the church and embedded in the myth of episcopal polity. As McMullen says, the interest Catholics in his study had in church policies on a higher hierarchical level was motivated by their acceptance of the myth of the church as an episcopal polity. If such acceptance is not there, the mechanisms of organizational action that are developed by the church are not effective—priests are still accepted as representatives of the organizational church and carry the charisma of office, but this does not necessarily mean that they are in a position of authority (understood after Weber as the probability that their orders will be obeyed).

Some Transcarpathian parishioners see themselves as participating in a congregational polity despite the fact that they are members of a church that supports the idea of an episcopal polity. In such a situation, if a priest wants to have authority, he has to legitimize it in ways that go beyond the ones envisaged within the framework of the episcopal myth.

Paul Tracey (2012) observes that relatively few scholars of management studies have analyzed religious organizations. This might be due to the methodological problems pointed out by Czarniawska, who writes that by far the most common methodological approach to studying a given organization is to become, for a time, its member (2012: 131). However, if it is possible to be employed as an industrial worker (Burawoy 1979), police trainee (Van Maanen 1973), or salesman (Leidner 1993) for the duration of a research project, it seems much more difficult to become a member of a religious organization, let alone its official, for a limited time. Thomas Kirsch (2004) has shown that stability of religious belief and conviction is not a requirement of all Christian denominations, but even in cases where it is not (such as in Kirsch's own research), the assumption of sincere conviction, even if only for the time being, was a prerequisite for participation in organized religious activities. At least in various forms of Christianity, if not in all religions, experiences deemed religious are believed to form the background on which religious institutions and organizations are built. In this way religion is different from other types of institutions and organizations. As Scherer (1998) writes:

Religious organizations are not only like other organizations—unions, corporations, stores, armies—they are also unique or different. Like other organizations, especially other voluntary associations, congregations must assemble resources, educate and enthuse the members to do the will of God, and, they hope, motivate the members to bear witness to their faith in their families and in their external occupations and communities. On the other hand, religious associations as “normative” organizations are unique in having transcendent resources—God, the “Holy Spirit,” sacramental acts and rites, prayer—that provide them with far superior motivations and loyalties in comparison with secular “utilitarian” organizations, which employ people mainly for money.⁴

⁴ <http://hirr.hartsem.edu/ency/Organization.htm> (accessed July 12, 2013).

I would add that these “transcendent resources” provide religious organizations with specific powers of argumentation, when any discussion on the shape of organizational practices can be cut through reference to a will of a divine. If the Catholic Church sees itself as the only legitimate pathway for the transmission of the divine will, such cases as apparitions when the divine is supposed to reach the faithful, bypassing those official channels, can be especially problematic for the church as organization.

I am aware that, as Hubert Knoblauch (2014) reminds us, focusing on religious institutions (organizations in my understanding) has long been subject to severe criticism, going back at least as far as Luckmann (1967). Luckmann was concerned that the concentration on religious organizations leads to what one might call “institutional reductionism”: religion becomes identified with the official structures and legitimations of religious organizations. According to Luckmann, this identification of religion with its organized forms means that the role religion plays in actions that are not part of or oriented toward formal organizations is as much neglected as its role among actors outside religious organizations. This critique may be true of sociology, but not of social anthropology. Far from being overemphasized, these organizational aspects are often neglected or underresearched in anthropological works. Religious organizations should, in my opinion, be moved toward the center of anthropological attention. In an interview given after the 2013 Wenner Gren Symposium on the Anthropology of Christianity, Joel Robbins noted that the organizational aspect of Christianity had been singled out by the participants as one of the most urgent research issues in the field.⁵ Similarly, Debra McDougall (2009) has noted that the newly developing subdiscipline, the anthropology of Christianity, focuses its attention on Christian ideology and on the ways in which Christianity conceptualizes and rearranges people’s visions of morality, materiality, and (in)dividuality, but pays little attention to the material and organizational conditions of Christian presence. These configurations of research interests in the anthropology of Christianity can, of course, be one of the results of the aforementioned debate on the influential work of the Comaroffs. For McDougall, however, Christianity is an invitation to reconsider relationships with regards to land, groups, and kin, but the realization of this reconsideration depends largely on the organizational structures of

⁵ <http://blog.wennergren.org/2013/04/wgf-symposium-the-anthropology-of-christianity-audio> (accessed October 30, 2013).

particular churches that operate in a given region. McDougall conducted her research on the Western Solomon Islands, where she compared two Protestant revivalist churches that managed to convert much of the population. Despite the fact that both churches belong to the same branch of Christianity, McDougall noticed that they produced different kinds of people, who “speak differently, eat differently, follow different patterns of work and leisure, observe different behavioural rules in interactions with particular categories of kinspeople, have different relationships with local places and have enjoyed different degrees of success in the translocal economy” (2009: 9–10). Her conclusion is that institutional and organizational arrangements are crucial for analyzing how Christianity is realized in a particular socio-historical location. This is my task in this book—to show the importance of the organization of religious life in a particular social and historical context. One of the most important and particular points is that in the attempt to introduce Eastern Christianity into the anthropology of Christianity (Hann 2007, 2012; Hann and Goltz 2010), too little attention has been given to organizational aspects, despite the fact that organizational questions lay at the basis of the split between the Byzantine and Latin churches (Agadjanian, Roudometof and Pankhurst 2005). One of the main arguments of this study is that the difference between branches of Christianity should also be analyzed on the organizational level because important patterns according to which people’s experiences are deemed religious are generated at that level.

Religious Organizations in (Post)socialism

The questions I undertake in this book resonate with earlier research I conducted in the Republic of Altai in southern Siberia. Among other issues, I tried to understand changes that I observed during the years of my research (1994–2008) in local religious traditions such as the cult of nature and practices related to shamans. I decided at that time to call the processes I observed the “institutionalization” of Altaian religious life (Halemba 2003, 2006, 2008a), although now I would call them organizing processes or “organizational embracement,” that is, the inclusion of given practices within some organizational structure. The comparisons that I inevitably made between the Republic of Altai and Transcarpathia when I started my fieldwork there in 2006 made me aware of the need to make a clear distinction between institution

and organization (and their derivatives) as analytical concepts, and also to show the complex relationship they have to each other and to experiences deemed religious (for anthropological uses of comparison, see Fox and Gingrich 2002: 4ff).

At first sight, my research on religious life in the Republic of Altai was very different from the research I conducted in Transcarpathia. Although both regions were part of the Soviet Union until 1991, in terms of religious practices they were quite different. In Siberia I conducted research among the Telengits⁶ and Altaians, among whom the “special things” were mostly aspects of land and the environment—mountains and mountain passes, springs, trees, and animals. There was a notion that the entire territory on which they lived, the Altai, was *eeliü*, that is, powerful in a highly specific way (Halemba 2006). People’s recognition of this special power was based on experiences that were in a certain respect available to everyone, but there were also people who could experience those powers in ways not accessible to others. Such people were called generally *biler kizhi* (“person who knows”) in the Altaian language, and included *kamdar* (“shamans”). The nature of those experiences and of the knowledge that was attributed to *biler kizhi* was the focus of a significant part of my earlier work (2006). What is important for the present argument is that until the mid-1990s, religious life among the Telengits was socially institutionalized, but not organized. There were well developed “special paths”—that is, ways of dealing with spirits—and ways in which experiences were interpreted and/or induced, but there was no religious organization claiming them as its domain. Such organizations appeared in the mid-1990s as a result of several processes, including missionary activities of various Christian churches (Broz 2009) and other organized religions (Halemba 2003), as well as efforts of Altaian national activists, who wanted to make sure that the titular ethnic group of the newly established Republic of Altai would have all the attributes of a modern nation, including a common religion (Halemba 2003, 2006; McBrien and Pelkmans 2008). Virtually all those activists were of the opinion that Altaian (including Telengit) religious life as it was encountered at the time could not form the basis of a national religion. Its rules and doctrines were neither clear nor explicit; rather, they were linked to particular religious practitioners and

⁶ The Telengits are now recognized as a “small-numbered indigenous people” (*korenniy malochislennyi narod*) of the Russian Federation. Prior to 2003, they were considered a subgroup of a larger Turkic-speaking group, Altaians (Rus.: *altaitsy*) (Donahoe et al. 2008; Halemba 2006).

the interpretations of their followers. There was no hierarchy and no orthodoxy checks, no explicit ways of legitimating and stabilizing authority. There was even no common name given to Altaian religious life; it was just recognized as “the way the things are done” (*jan*). Even more significantly, some people in the 1990s claimed that Altaians did not have a religion at all (using the Russian term *religiia* in this case), and therefore they could only profit from the introduction of some organized religion that would give them all the benefits of “having religion” as they envisioned it for their national identity (Broz 2009; Halembe 2006).

Interestingly, the spirits that were encountered by *biler kizhi* were as flexible and elusive as the practices of religious life. The initial task of a practitioner encountering a given spirit was to try to ascertain precisely with whom he or she was interacting. This determination was based on the practitioner’s perceptions, the smells, sounds, and bodily feelings that served as landmarks indicating to him or her an identity of the spirit, who could nevertheless always *kubulyt*, that is, transform itself into something else. This flexibility of spirits was one of the first aspects to be challenged by religious organizations when they were invited or formed to help transform Altaian religious life. For example, one of the options considered by Altaian proponents of “organizational embracement” in the religious sphere was the introduction of Buddhism, which was considered in many respects close to Altaian traditions of nature worship (Halembe 2003). One of the first things the Buddhist missionaries did, after coming to Altai, was to try to stabilize the spirits of nature. In earlier publications (Halembe 2006, 2008a), I describe how Buddhist lamas tried to explain to the local people that on this mountain there is a spirit with a certain outward appearance and characteristics, while on that mountain there is another spirit which clearly looks and behaves differently from the first one. Similar processes happened when people tried to establish new religious organizations based on Altaian religious life. They also tried to police boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, and to establish authoritative knowledge and channels for its distribution. These efforts to organize religious life not only influenced existing socially institutionalized religious practices, but also tried to define anew what counts as religious experience. One can say that in the Altai experiences deemed religious, as well as institutionalized religious ways of doing things, were very much present when the Soviet Union collapsed. *Biler kizhi* practiced and healed, and people conducted socially recognizable rituals while hunting or traveling in the mountains. Still, those practices were not recognized by some as properly

religious because they were not embedded in a field of religious organizations (Scott 2001). In order to stand side by side with Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Buddhism, or Islam and be recognized as a religion, the Altaian experiences of “special things” and “special paths” had to be transformed. These attempts at transformation were welcomed by some and challenged by others. While some people thought that religion without an organizational dimension was not really religion at all, others were of the opinion that organizing religious practices could result in transforming them to the point where they were no longer recognizable. This clearly shows that while organized religion may be optional, it is nevertheless significant—it makes a crucial difference whether one’s religious practices are seen as part of an organized religious field or not.

This situation was very different from the one I encountered in Transcarpathia, a region in which the presence of religious organizations has been strong for centuries. While in the Altai religious organizations were relatively recently introduced into the lives of people and some people did not see a need for them at all, in Ukraine people seemed to generally accept that religious life needs an organizational dimension and that a church has the right to provide it. There are still, however, many questions to be answered: Which church should organize religious life? How should it do so? What exactly are the prerogatives of its officials? How much should religious organization influence established institutionalized patterns of religious life? Does a religious organization have the right to define what counts as a religious experience?

Detailed ethnographic studies of religion in postsocialist countries suggest that religious life did not merely survive socialism, but became deeply transformed in the process. There were changes in people’s attitudes toward religious organizations (Dragadze 1993; Kaneff 2002); crucial transformations of religious concepts (Ssorin-Chaikov 2001); changes in the general understanding of what religion is about (Broz 2009; Halemba 2003, 2006; McBrien and Pelkmans 2008; Wanner and Steinberg 2008); transformations of relations between religion as local practice and politics (Kehl-Bodrogi 2008; Ališauskienė and Schröder 2012a). As Wanner and Steinberg (2008: 17) write, “After seventy-four years of socialism, Soviet society was not secularized in the sense of a diminishing belief in otherworldliness. Nor has this been simply a matter of enduring religious mentalities. The Soviet experience itself nurtured understandings of good and evil, agency and destination, and authority and submission that are part of the cultural and social landscape today.” I agree that the socialist period did not succeed in diminishing *in toto* the importance of

religion in the lives of people, but it nevertheless seriously influenced the ways in which people see religious experiences, institutions, and organizations, and their own place in relation to them. From this it does not follow, however, that state socialism influenced all aspects of religion in all the different regions in similar ways. Within the former Communist Bloc there were significant differences in the position of particular denominations and religious world-views, and considerable variation in church-state relations in different countries (Borowik and Babiński 1997; Borowik and Tomka 2001). The effects of this diversity are still visible today in various aspects of religious life, such as in differences in the relationship between priests and believers (*see* Halemba 2008c; Mahieu 2010). More importantly, Irene Hilgers (2009) argued that the term “re-traditionalization” used by scholars such as Habiba Fathi in reference to the postsocialist religious situation in Uzbekistan creates the impression that religion and tradition in Uzbekistan vanished during Soviet times, only to be revived after Uzbekistan’s independence, a conclusion that Hilgers deems incorrect. I think that we can examine the differential impact of socialism on various aspects of religious life according to the analytical framework suggested in this study, which relates experiences, institutions, and organizations to one another. Painting with a broad brush, we can say that Soviet policies and the practices of a state devoted to atheism diminished the influence of organizational religion, strengthened the role of personal experiences, and in some cases (such as in Transcarpathia) also strengthened the importance of socially institutionalized forms of religiosity. With the collapse of the Soviet state, organized religion started to claim or re-claim its hold on the religious lives of people.

I have derived valuable inspiration from a brief article by Tamara Dragadze (1993), in which the author speaks about the domestication of religion in the Soviet state. According to Dragadze, the repression of churches (organizational religion) in the Soviet Union resulted in shifting actual religious practices outside the control of religious organizations and designated places of worship, and into the realm of private homes and the concern of a wide range of lay believers. In a situation where access to religious specialists was limited or dangerous, laypeople took over responsibility for the survival and continuation of religious life, executing many religious rituals that previously had been under the control and supervision of representatives of religious organizations. In this process, many religious practices formerly in the domain of religious organizations became re-institutionalized on a social level. Since the collapse of the

Soviet Union, the most problematic issue has not been the revival of religious life in general, as for most people, at least in Transcarpathia, the importance of “special things” and the need to formalize relationships with them (i.e., to build or sustain “special paths”) is self-evident, and that did not change during Soviet times. Rather, the troublesome issue has been the position of religious organizations. From the point of view of religious organizations in Transcarpathia, the biggest challenge is to secure control over religious institutions and experiences deemed religious. During Soviet times the religious dimension of people’s lives was neither lost nor replaced by the state-imposed atheistic worldview, but it was transformed in important ways. Most significantly, most religious life happened outside of organizational control.

The anthropological literature on religious life in the Soviet Union has been for obvious reasons written mostly from a postsocialist perspective (Schröder 2012). There were few researchers who could conduct ethnographic fieldwork in the Soviet Union, and it was even more difficult to conduct research on religious issues. Ališauskienė and Schröder (2012b) describe Gail Kligman’s *The Wedding of the Dead: Ritual, Poetics and Popular Culture in Transylvania* (1988) as the only work based on fieldwork and chiefly concerning religious life under socialism that came out during the socialist period. But that particular study was conducted outside the Soviet Union. As for the Soviet Union, the works of Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer (1978, 1992) and Caroline Humphrey (1983, 1998) examined transformations in religious life, but also documented the persistence of it, in Soviet society. Still, it can be said that the kind of research on religion that was done in the Soviet Union does not give us enough background to judge what exactly religious life looked like on a day-to-day basis as practiced by particular people, often in the absence of religious organizations. To what extent religion was a part of the lives of Soviet citizens is difficult to assess. But what has happened in the twenty years since the collapse of the Soviet Bloc seems to suggest that the challenge was not to restore a will to believe and experience religiously, but to revive organizational religion.

Field Research

This study started as part of a collaborative research project entitled *Religious Tradition, Communism, and Cultural Re-evaluation: Transnationalism in post-1989 East European Cultures of Remembrance*, carried out at the Centre of

History and Culture of East Central Europe at the University of Leipzig. For this project I was asked to provide ethnographic case studies from the Carpathian Mountains. The choice of region was related to the main assumption of the project as outlined by the project's leader, Professor Stefan Troebst. According to the project outline, there are at least three topoi that are especially important in religious and national identity construction in East Central Europe: cults of the Virgin Mary, Cyrillo-Methodiana, and the idea of *antemurale Christianis* (see Gasior et al. 2014). Those were treated as transnational topoi, that is, themes that are mobilized in national identity formation in many different countries, always presented as unique for a given nation, but, at the same time, observed in many different countries in the region. It was assumed that the Carpathian Mountains could provide the opportunity to investigate the intertwining of the three topoi, especially because of the strong presence of Greek Catholic tradition in this region and a perception of the Carpathian Mountains as a natural border between different sets of cultural influences (East versus West, Asia versus Europe). Between 2006 and 2011, I conducted field research mainly in the Transcarpathian Ukraine, but also in neighboring regions of Slovakia. The particular place where I started my research was selected on the advice of Vlad Naumescu, an anthropologist who had previously worked in Ukrainian Galicia (2008a). In the course of his research he heard about a new apparition of the Virgin Mary in Transcarpathia from Galician Greek Catholic believers, and advised me to start my research there. The apparition site in Dzhublyk proved to be so interesting and provided such a good gateway to the analysis of the situation of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia that it became the main focus of my study, which ultimately went well beyond a scope of the Leipzig-based project.

The Dzhublyk apparition site is located in the Irshava District of Transcarpathia, the territory of which has until recently been coterminous with the territory of the Irshava Deanery within Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy.⁷ The territory of this deanery constituted my principal field site. The Irshava District has a population of approximately 90,000 inhabitants, most of whom live in villages. At different times during my fieldwork I lived in the town of Irshava and in the villages of Nizhe Bolotne and Priborzhavs'ke. I talked to all of the Greek Catholic priests working in the Irshava Deanery,

⁷ In 2011, shortly before the conclusion of my fieldwork, this deanery was divided into two smaller units: the Bilki Deanery and the Irshava Deanery.

and I conducted interviews with members of the church councils in almost all the villages in the region with Greek Catholic parishes, as well as with regular parishioners. Most interviews with laity were conducted in Bilki, Vil'khivka, Nyzhnie Bolotne, Irshava, Imstychovo, and Borzhavs'ke, but it was in Nyzhnie Bolotne, Irshava, and the Orthodox village of Priborzhavs'ke where I developed especially good relationships with people that enabled long-term participant observation.

The field research was conducted over the course of five research visits in August 2006, May–June 2007, August–September 2007, July–October 2008, and May–July 2011. The timing of my fieldwork visits was dictated by several factors. First, the requirements of the collaborative project, in which I was the only trained anthropologist, necessitated that field research be interspersed with periods of work and discussion with colleagues in Leipzig. Second, I was interested in transformations of the apparition site, which necessitated observation of the changes that took place over a long period of time. Third, the long break in fieldwork between 2008 and 2011 was due to personal circumstances—the birth of my daughter in December 2009. She subsequently accompanied me on my fieldwork trip in 2011. Moreover, my aim was never to conduct an analysis of a single community, but of multiple networks, relations, and practices. Pursuit of this goal led me away from the initial location (i.e., the apparition site itself). I worked in all villages in the Irshava Deanery where Greek Catholics live, as well as in some settlements with an Orthodox majority; I conducted interviews and participated in events organized by eparchial authorities in towns throughout the region; I traveled to the neighboring regions of western Ukraine to meet supporters of the apparition site; I participated in international pilgrimages organized by people from Transcarpathia to see how they negotiate the presence of the sacred in other locations and how issues of religious authority play out outside their home villages; and I attended ceremonies on the anniversaries of the apparition and observed the changes that took place at the site between 2006 and 2011. While it was not exactly what Hannerz (2007[2003]) has called “multi-sited fieldwork” because most of the time I focused on one Greek Catholic deanery in Ukrainian Transcarpathia, it was also not the classical ethnographic fieldwork focused on one community. As I was interested in diverse responses to particular challenges posed by innovations within religious life, I treated those innovations as focal points and tried to understand discourses concerning them and their transformations from many different vantage points. I also decided to follow the routes and

connections people on the ground have rather than focus on the complexities of a single strictly local social situation.

In addition, I worked in a regional archive in Uzhhorod, the capital of Transcarpathia. I was also granted access to some documents of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy (MGCE), although full access to all more recent documents, for which I formally applied to the MGCE, was denied on the grounds that they would be available for research purposes fifty years from the date of issue. However, I did manage to get access to many documents through the Theodore Romzha Greek Catholic Seminary in Uzhhorod. I am especially grateful to one of its lecturers, the historian Father Danil Bendas, who shared with me his impressive private archive. An invaluable source of information for me proved to be the private archive of the late Bishop Ivan Marhitych, to which I had access thanks to a personal recommendation from one of his followers. This archive has not yet been organized or categorized—at the time of my fieldwork it consisted of hundreds of letters, drafts of sermons, newspapers, and leaflets gathered and created by Bishop Marhitych and stored unsorted in cardboard boxes. It contains, for example, copies of internal church correspondence (with the Vatican, among Greek Catholic hierarchs, with international organizations), as well as copies of resolutions accepted by some Transcarpathian parishes. The life and work of Ivan Marhitych has as of yet not been well documented,⁸ but the content of this archive proves that he was an active shaper of Greek Catholic life in Transcarpathia.

Discussing her pioneering research on born-again Christians in the United States, Susan Harding wrote that one of the challenges that faced her from the very beginning of her fieldwork was to secure a place for herself from which she could “gather information.” She realized that in the perception of the born-again Christians, there was no place for a sympathetic, ready to participate, but nevertheless objective observer. For them, her willingness to learn about their religion was proof that she wanted to develop her own relationship with God. There was no place “outside”; there was only a place “inside.” As she wrote, “I might think there was, but the church people did not, no matter what I said. It was inconceivable to them that anyone with an appetite for the gospel as great

⁸ Some films and articles about Marhitych are available locally. The journal *Ekzyl*, published in Uzhhorod, devoted a large part of its volume number 10–12 (15) in 2007 to the life of Marhitych.

as mine was simply ‘gathering information,’ was just there to ‘write a book.’ No, I was searching” (2000: 40).

There were moments during my research in Transcarpathia when I felt this way as well, admittedly difficult and sometimes uncomfortable moments. I am Polish, and in this region of Europe, Polish and Roman Catholic are seen as two inseparable aspects of the same identity (Buzalka 2008; Pasięka 2015; Pasięka and Sekerdej 2013). I was rarely questioned at first about my own beliefs, because my interlocutors assumed that I must be a devout Catholic—a conviction confirmed by my keen interest in the Greek Catholic Church. Over time, however, my friends and close informants, particularly those who could observe me during divine liturgies (when I went neither to communion nor to confession) or who met my husband (a German atheist with a Protestant background) realized that the Polish-Catholic assumption was a mistake. This realization did sometimes change the tone of my conversations concerning religion. Realizing that I am not as devout a Catholic as they assumed, some people adopted a position similar to the one described by Harding and assumed I must be searching for religious truth in their church, while others actually took it as an opportunity to talk with me about their own doubts and criticisms concerning religious organizations. Fortunately, the recognition that I am wanting in terms of my own Catholic devotion never ended in rejection.

It does not mean, however, that there were no challenging moments or, even more importantly, difficult ethical choices related to this fieldwork. I should mention one particular aspect that made my work, particularly the writing-up process, especially difficult and which is directly related to the argument presented in this book. In my previous work in Siberia I obviously had to deal with a multiplicity of perspectives. This also included observations concerning those aspects of my interlocutors’ lives that they considered not worth chronicling and analyzing. Vodka consumption, for example, was one such aspect. However, I never had the impression that my work could offend or endanger anyone; nor did I feel that I was revealing some aspects of the Altaian way of life that should remain hidden or secret. In short, in the process of writing I could remain true to myself as well as to my interlocutors. It never happened that I was given a piece of information that my interlocutor did not want to see in print but which seemed so crucial to me that I felt that I had to use it. Moreover, as I was not dealing with a well established organization, it was relatively easy to anonymize my interlocutors.

The fieldwork in Transcarpathia was much different. I am dealing in this work with a well-organized, hierarchical organization, operating within a particular territory, whose history is relevant for understanding contemporary processes. I have changed the names of my interlocutors throughout the work and I try to protect their anonymity as much as possible; it is, however, clear to me that many details could possibly lead to the identification of the people concerned. Besides, some persons holding official positions (such as the managers of the apparition site in Dzhublyk or the bishops) figure in my book under their real names—there was no way I could hide their identities. Here, much more than in any of my previous works, I feel as if I am walking a thin line between protecting my interlocutors and providing an honest ethnographic account. A large part of my research was conducted among the officially appointed representatives of the church: priests. They knew that my work concerned the contemporary Greek Catholic Church in the region, and they saw themselves in relation to my work both as individuals, each with different views and personal histories, but also as representatives of the church. They were clearly concerned with the image of the church that their words and behavior would impress upon me, especially if I was to learn about internal controversies or problems among church officials. As one of the priests told me after two hours of conversation that revealed some important internal church conflicts, “I do not want such things to be written down, but I am telling you this so you can understand the situation. Obviously, you have to write it in a way that will not harm the church.” Other priests made similar comments during interviews, emphasizing that I must handle the information with care because it was not their intention to hurt the church. Such dilemmas reappeared constantly throughout the process of writing—the internal life of the Catholic Church seems to be fraught with deeply destabilizing tensions. Can my work harm the church? Should this concern me? I personally do not share their concern about the church, but I do try to stay true to my interlocutors and their demands. This is a general difficulty of doing research with groups that are in an advantaged position. Anthropologists tend to take the side of the disadvantaged and the marginalized. Still, we need to do more research on the dominant groups, organizations, and movements, despite the ethical issues that such research raises.

These observations about doing research within a religious organization are important for at least two reasons. First, they show very clearly that a religious organization can be for its members the highest value in itself, the

incarnation of God's holiness and an agent that can act, but that also has to be protected. Second, they made me realize once again that, as a discipline, anthropology has thus far not developed adequate ethical guidelines for working with the powerful and the privileged. Most anthropological works are written in empathy with local communities. Anthropological writings are most often anti-hegemonic; the authors present alternative points of view, heterodoxies, communities on the margins, the disadvantaged, the poor. By working as much as possible from within church structures, I put myself into a very different milieu and position. I was trying to understand the workings of what appeared to me at times to be a domination-creating machine in the form of a charismatic bureaucracy (Constas 1958, 1961; Kirsch 2003; Swatos 1981) that uses all possible arguments and techniques to maintain its status, and for which spiritual transcendence is at times a resource used to create domination. I had the feeling that Karl Marx was watching me from a distance. Nevertheless, as much as I could, I tried to understand the mechanisms and refrain from passing judgment. I leave that to the reader. I am also making all possible efforts to make sure that this study does not compromise any of those who trusted and confided in me.

Fortunately for me, there were some priests who fully realized the possible dangers of my work for the church, but embraced it anyway. I am very grateful to them for sharing with me their conviction that transparency should also apply to the church as an organization. I also thank those who understood that one cannot simply dismiss all difficult questions by referring to the Holy Spirit as the ultimate source of the church's power, regardless of what is done by the clergy. One such priest told me that my work will only make sense, if I do not allow myself to be dragged into the argumentation by one or the other party within the eparchy, and instead develop my own understanding. I tried hard to follow his advice.

I believe it is extremely important to conduct research among the clergy in religious organizations—in the case of Christianity, the bishops, pastors, deacons, and candidates for priesthood. So far we have more work on Christian religious specialists living in relatively secluded communities—in monasteries and other type of congregations of people who reside together (Campbell-Jones 1979; Corwin 2012; Irvine 2010a,b; Lester 2003, 2005). This is a valuable body of work. Still, in order to understand the way religion is present and important in today's world and especially its presence in (or return to) the public arena,

we have to analyze the workings of the church as an organization, using anthropological perspectives that focus on actions, understandings, and the meaning-making practices of the people who see themselves as privileged members of such an organization. It is important to allow the plurality and multivocality of positions and perspectives to emerge, and to see how these multiple voices are shaped and shape the organizational procedures, ideologies, and practices.

Structure of the Book

The remainder of this book comprises four chapters and a conclusion. The next chapter provides a brief overview of the academic literature on apparitions of the Virgin Mary. The apparitions in Dzhublyk are located within the apparitional patterns known from that literature. I also present an interpretation of the role of the church commissions, that is, committees established to investigate apparitional claims and assist the church in deciding whether to officially recognize and approve apparitions or to withhold such approval. Contrary to assumptions implicitly or explicitly present in most works on Marian apparitions, I argue that the role of such commissions is not to prove or disprove the apparitions' veracity, but to provide conditions under which the negotiations regarding the new site can be directed so as to secure ecclesiastical control over it and prevent eventual splits within the church. This chapter also serves as a presentation of the main events and features of the Dzhublyk apparition site.

Chapter 3 refers to the Virgin Mary's calls for unity as a special message for Ukraine, Transcarpathia, and the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy. I present the Dzhublyk apparitions as a significant event in a long-standing discussion concerning relations between Transcarpathia, its Slavic-speaking population, and the Ukrainian state. First, I present the position of Transcarpathia in today's Ukraine, paying particular attention to the national question. Next I outline the history of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy in relation to the Vatican and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. This is followed by a presentation of current discussions within the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia that concern national identity, with special attention given to the lives and work of two important figures: Bishop Ivan Marhitych and Bishop Ivan Semedii.

The chapter concludes with an analysis of crucial events and symbolism at Dzhublyk and their interpretation with regard to contemporary identity politics in the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy.

The next chapter is structured around the Virgin Mary's directive to elevate the authority of priests. From the perspective of parish priests and the hierarchy of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia, the relationship between the laity and the clergy is not at present satisfactory. On the one hand, great respect for the priestly calling is evident, and there is a willingness to see priests as spiritual and moral guides for the laity. On the other hand, priests are treated as providers of specific services who are not expected to actively shape the life of local religious communities. This chapter traces some of the conditions that may have given rise to this situation, looking in particular at the practicalities of religious communities during Soviet times, but also into particular legal arrangements, partly inherited from Soviet legislation, that account for the relatively strong position of laity vis-à-vis clergy and religious organizations. The focus then shifts to the ways in which religious authority is understood by Greek Catholic priests, with the priests of the Irshava Deanery serving as my example. I examine how the concept of the church is understood by the priests and by laypeople, and how the Dzhublyk apparitions have influenced the understanding of the church as a hierarchical organization, as the community of the people of God, and as the Body of Christ, which are called, respectively, the organizational, communal, and mystical dimensions of the church.

Chapter 5 focuses on interpretations of the Virgin Mary's repeated call for unity in her appearances at Dzhublyk, and looks at how people interpret the notion of religious unity in a variety of ways. Although there are influential groups in Transcarpathia that do not subscribe to the ideology of complete unity between Transcarpathia and Western Ukraine on political, national, cultural, and ecclesiastical levels, this does not mean that the idea of unity as such is not recognized as a value. On the contrary, unity (*iednist'*) is seen as the highest good, despite the fact that Transcarpathia is often portrayed as a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse region. The questions, then, are about the kind of unity that is valued and how the Dzhublyk apparitions help us understand the shifting borders that change and shape anew this valued unity.

Throughout this book the Dzhublyk apparitions are seen as both a symptom and an instrument of change in the religious field. Although virtually everyone, including the visionaries referring to the words of the Virgin Mary, seems to talk about unity as an ideal of religious life, the understandings of what counts

as unity can be quite different. Moreover, those divergent understandings coexist and mutually influence each other in ways that allow each interested party to claim to be precisely the one that is the main protector of unity. In Chapter 5, the relationships between the local parish community and the Dzhublyk devotees are analyzed. From the point of view of some parishioners, the presence of Dzhublyk threatens the integrity of local religious communities. Using terminology proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000), I show that for some people, especially the younger Dzhublyk devotees, more important than a feeling of belonging to a bounded religious group is a sense of connectedness to global Catholicism. The use of modern technologies facilitates the emergence of a new type of religiosity, which I refer to as “network-based religion.” What is important, however, is that these people are still concerned about staying within a framework that can be defined as Catholic. The members of religious networks see their religious involvement not only or not even primarily as a path toward deepening their own religious experiences, but as ways that enable their engagement with a globalized world, which includes influencing public debates.

Subsequently, the activities of the representatives of the organizational church—Catholic priests and bishops—are analyzed to show how support for certain kinds of religious practices introduces substantial changes into religious life on the local level. Those changes lead to differentiation within a field of “Orthodox imaginary” as it has been identified by Vlad Naumescu (2008a). Naumescu claims that in western Ukraine, organizational belonging is of little importance for many Christian believers as long as they can practice their religion within a specific ritual framework, which he presents as common to Eastern Christians in western Ukraine. Here I show that the policies of the Catholic Church actively try to break up this “Orthodox imaginary,” despite official calls for the re-Byzantization of the Greek Catholic Church.

The concluding chapter summarizes the argument of the book and reflects on the negotiations over Dzhublyk in more detail. This book argues that the existence of the Holy See and the special status granted to it in an international arena otherwise dominated by nation-states affords the Catholic Church a level of political participation that is not accessible to other religious organizations. The Vatican is, in other words, perceived as a global structure of political influence, and local Catholic churches that identify themselves with the hierarchical center in the Vatican are deeply influenced by this identification. This is what sets the Greek Catholic Church apart from Orthodox churches, despite

their outward similarities. Timothy A. Byrnes writes that “the Catholic Church is at the moment both impressively global and unassailably local at one and the same time” (2001: 135). In this book I attempt to capture this local-global dynamic: without denying the historically grounded local specificities and subversive practices that are usually the focus of anthropological studies, I pay attention to how organizational belonging and identification with a centralized religious organization matter in local religious life.

CHAPTER 2

The Dzhublyk Apparitions and Modern Apparitional Patterns

This chapter includes a brief introduction to the Dzhublyk apparitions and the events that shaped the development of religious movements around the apparition site. Most of the information presented here is developed more thoroughly in subsequent chapters, with an analysis that goes beyond the apparition site itself to explore the broader themes of authority, legitimacy, and power in religious organizations, as well as questions of religious and national unity in present-day Ukraine. Here, the situation and development of Dzhublyk are related to the existing social science literature on apparitions, exploring a range of possible avenues of interpretation and showing why I have chosen to shape my work on Dzhublyk in a particular way.

The Virgin Mary and other holy figures have been the subjects of visions since the very beginning of Christianity, although the pattern of apparitions has changed over time. In medieval times the visionaries were mainly male members of the clergy, and the visions themselves were not necessarily focused on the Virgin Mary. The number of Marian visions first peaked between 1400 and 1530 (Blackbourn 1993). The second peak of Marian apparitions came after the French revolution. Since that time, a typical pattern has characterized many of the subsequent apparitions and apparitional sites: the visionaries are usually children (generally girls) or, less often, women, mostly from disadvantaged backgrounds; the Virgin Mary becomes the main messenger; the visions take place outside religious buildings, most often in the countryside; the visions come in a series—the first encounter with the Virgin Mary is just a prelude to a sequence of visions occurring over a period of weeks, months, or even years. Moreover, the visionary events become public—while during the initial event the visionaries are on their own, during subsequent meetings with the Virgin Mary or other holy figures they are accompanied by a growing number of

pilgrims who engage in “apparition work,” significantly contributing to establishing and sustaining the validity of the phenomenon (Davis and Boles 2003). Moreover, according to Blackbourn (1993), in the medieval period, visions were usually presented as an integral part of the visionary’s biography, and he or she frequently became the focus of veneration (often being declared a saint) and the foundation of a cult. Since the mid-nineteenth century, however, the visions have become events in the lives of otherwise unremarkable children, most often poor, marginalized, and leading a difficult life, who are “increasingly likely to be female rather than male, a child rather than an adult, lay rather than clerical” (Blackbourn 1993: 3). Blackbourn suggests that we should regard the widespread popular support for such visionaries as a sophisticated mobilization of deep-rooted cultural resources by a community beset by social dislocation. There is one more feature on which the interpreters of Marian apparitions agree: that the Virgin Mary comes in times of crisis, often during social and economic crises that cut across class divisions (Bennett 2012).

Sandra L. Zimdars-Swartz provides a valuable overview of some earlier works on Marian apparitions and Marian cults in general in her book *Encountering Mary: From La Salette to Medjugorje* (1991: 271–278). The book itself is devoted to an analysis of the development of selected modern apparitions of the Virgin Mary in several locations: Lourdes (France), La Salette (France), and Fatima (Portugal) are apparition sites fully recognized by the Catholic Church and play an important part in mainstream Catholic devotion. San Damiano (Italy), San Sebastian de Garabandal (Spain), Melleray (Ireland), and Medjugorje (Bosnia and Herzegovina) have not been officially recognized by the church; as such, the degree of attention they receive from local bishops, lower clergy, and lay pilgrims varies. Medjugorje, for example, is an internationally known pilgrimage site with active worldwide support groups, and periodically attracts official church investigations. Melleray, on the other hand, is known only locally and is developing without much interest on the part of church officials beyond the immediate local level.

Zimdars-Swartz’s main focus is on the processes through which religious experiences become interpreted and grow from individual histories of encounters with the divine to events of public significance and all-encompassing accounts of world history. Perhaps the most important contribution of her book is the identification of what she calls “modern apparition worldviews,” that have grown up around Marian apparitions and which reach beyond the personal significance of religious experiences, and even beyond local political instru-

mentalizations of the apparitions. These broader apparition worldviews are characterized, according to Zimdars-Swartz, by the belief that we live in the “last days” immediately preceding the Second Coming of Christ. Because of this ultimacy of the present, the Virgin Mary comes crying, demanding, or almost begging humanity to pray and do penance. Zimdars-Swartz calls this an “apocalyptic ideology” that is “a sort of popular, free-floating apocalyptic worldview, built out of images and themes prominent in the messages of the more recent apparitions and can be seen as anchored in almost any one, or any combination of, these apparitions” (1991: 247). Zimdars-Swartz views the modern apparitional culture as a transnational phenomenon, not only because researchers can find common characteristics and patterns of development in Marian apparitional movements throughout the world, but also because both apologetic interpreters (such as Rene Laurentin [1991] and John Beevers [1954]) and devotees see the various apparitions of the Virgin Mary as directly related to one another. On the one hand, this is not surprising—after all, the same sacred figure is believed to talk to people in each case and in relation to the same organizational context (i.e., the Catholic Church). Nevertheless, Zimdars-Swartz shows that the Marian apparitional worldviews are actually composed of cross-referencing, cross-fertilization, and mimesis, all of which allows us to talk about a transnational apparitional network and culture (Margry 2004). Zimdars-Swartz makes an analytical distinction between the religious experiences of visionaries and devotees and the political exploitation of the apparitions by various organizational agents, most importantly the Catholic Church, claiming that political instrumentalizations are possible because of the immense personal and social energy that characterizes the religious experiences of the pilgrims and the seers. This relationship between experience and organization is, in my opinion, what makes Marian apparitions such an interesting and theoretically inspiring phenomenon. Still, the works to date prove that although the intersection of religious experience and politics forms the core of apparitional phenomena, it is very difficult to grasp their relationship analytically. Therefore, most analyses have tended to concentrate on one or the other aspect—either religious experience or political instrumentalization.

The work of Perry and Echeverría (1988), which also provides a broader view of Marian apparitions, speaks directly and almost exclusively to political instrumentalizations. The authors venture little into the personal experiences of devotees and visionaries, focusing instead on the management and political significance of Marian apparitions and the cult of Mary, more generally, within

the Catholic Church. Perry and Echeverría view Mary as an important symbolic resource that has been exploited primarily by militant and conservative Catholicism. They are interested in a militant Marianism and its development in relation to power struggles in Rome, seeing apparitions mostly as a means to reassert pontifical and ecclesiastical authority, and as channels for conservative forces that support an authoritarian, conservative church. They provide a wealth of material, and I do appreciate their focus on the political mobilization of Marian apparitions. Their book is a welcome addition to the majority of studies of apparitions that, following Zimdras-Swartz's approach, take visions of seers and the religious experiences of pilgrims as primary facts, and treat their instrumentalization as subsequent stages in the movements' or the sites' development (Apolito 1998; Bennett 2012; Blackbourn 1993). However, Perry and Echeverría's interpretation—that the promotion of a Marian apparitional cult is a form of acquiescence to the authoritarian and conservative vision of the church, while the rejection of such a cult is a sign of willingness to reform itself on the part of existing church structures and ideologies—is too simplistic. I agree with those who point out that the Virgin Mary appears in moments of crisis that are often caused or exacerbated by internal ecclesiastical conflicts. But it cannot be said that she is always instrumentalized in support of conservative ideas. To the contrary, Marian apparitions are often sites of opposition to a particular type of ecclesiastical control, and the contemporary Catholic Church can be extremely skeptical of or even hostile to apparitional events.

The individual apparitional sites have also generated a great deal of social scientific literature, but most of the richest accounts concern apparitions that, at the time of writing, had already enjoyed a long devotional history and a well-established status vis-à-vis the Catholic Church as an organization (Bennett 2012; Blackbourn 1993; Christian 1996; Harris 2000; Hynes 2008; Kaufman 2008). Although some of those works also aimed at analysis of the negotiations among stakeholders over the future of a given site, the authors obviously had to rely on written sources that gave limited access to what had been silenced during the initial weeks or months of the apparitions. This is all the more true, as William Christian (1996) writes, because the Catholic Church is not very forthcoming in providing access to files related to visions, especially those that document the complexity of initial negotiations and decisions. Therefore, of special interest are works that are based on ethnographic observation of the initial phase of the development of apparitional sites. There

is a rich body of work on the relatively new site in Medjugorje in Bosnia and Herzegovina that deals with many aspects of the apparitions, including pilgrims' experience (Skrbiš 2007), the development of tourism and the impact of the site on the local economy (Vukonić 1992), the contested nature of the site and its role in local politics (Bax 1990, 2000; Claverie 2009; Skrbiš 2005),⁹ and the position of the visionaries (Bitel 2009). Still, even the most thorough works on Medjugorje were conducted by researchers who arrived at the apparition site several years after the initial events (Bax 1995; Claverie 2009).

In this respect, the work of Paolo Apolito is truly exceptional because it is, to the best of my knowledge, the only fieldwork-based monograph concerning a contemporary Marian apparition site where the researcher was present at the site almost from the very beginning of its development. Apolito started his fieldwork at Oliveto Citra (Italy) just a few days after a group of boys first reported their visions of the Virgin Mary (Apolito 1998). He had the rare opportunity to observe and record in detail the processes through which the initial "accounts of events" provided by an ever-growing number of seers turned into "events as recounted," following a trajectory from "narratives as stories" to "narratives as facts" (1998: 5ff). He observed how, through negotiations over narrative accounts, the bodily involvement and ritual activities of the seers and the pilgrims—in other words, their subjective experiences—were eventually turned into an "objective" fact that an apparition had occurred. With important methodological implications, he says that within two years after the initial events, Oliveto Citra turned into a pilgrimage site that was little different from other local pilgrimage places, including those fully embraced by the Catholic

⁹ I have recently been made aware of a controversy regarding the work of Mart Bax. A review commission at the VU University of Amsterdam appears to have confirmed that he fabricated some of his data, including data concerning Medjugorje. In their report the members of the commission state, however, that "[a] number of researchers who have shared their critical insights into Bax's work with the committee have remarked on how impressed they were—and sometimes still are—with Bax's ideas. His conception of the various 'religious regimes' has been of direct inspiration to them. Various interviewees referred to Bax's keen eye for crucial themes and insights, which were topical and innovative at the time. In this sense they stressed that he had spurred both themselves and others on to new research. They acknowledge this influence from Bax's work, but this leaves them all the more taken aback by the doubts in hindsight that have arisen around his research and conclusions." This statement accurately reflects my own position as well. The report is available at: www.vu.nl/en/Images/20131112%20Rapport%20Commissie%20Baud%20Engelse%20versie%20definitief_tcm12-365093.pdf (accessed December 4, 2013).

Church. His early research engagement with the site provided him with a unique opportunity to follow closely the initial processes of the institutionalization and the organizational embracement of the apparition. Having collected truly unique material, he analyzed the visions and messages that were officially promoted as well as those that were suppressed, and offered a number of valuable insights.

Apolito writes that “the parish priest, the committee, the seers, the devout and the curious interacted in a new world they themselves created, which was held together not by a common truth—there were various, multiform, local levels of truth even for the same person—but by the common practices of the context” (1998: 34). Apolito observes that, initially, the concern with proof of the veracity of the apparition occupied a great deal of the attention of pilgrims, local lay activists, and church authorities. He also suggests, however, that, quite early into the process of institutionalization and organizational embracement, the concern with elucidating a common truth regarding the apparitional events was replaced with an interest in sustaining common practices around the apparition and a common world in which a symbolic as well as material space for the apparitions could be secured—in other words, the focus shifted from experience to institution. He seems to suggest that a common understanding of what really happened at Oliveto Citra was not the crucial factor motivating people to invest their time, support, and devotion in the site; the common denominator was, rather, an attempt to keep the emerging site alive. Apolito’s approach points to an important merging of different approaches to understanding experience. This merging stems from treating experience as the basis of religious life and collapsing the experiences of individuals (in these cases visionaries) with experience as the core of religious practice on the institutional and organizational levels. This also has to do with researchers’ apprehensiveness about writing in a way that might suggest that they doubt the veracity or validity of the experiences of visionaries. Still, we have to remember, as Apolito has shown, that although experience is the basis of religious practice and thought, there is neither *the* religious experience nor even *a* religious experience in its concrete realization to which institutional and organizational religious life can be always traced. In brief, the institutionalization and organizational embracement lead as much away from experience as toward it, creating it anew in the process.

The interplay between religious experience and political instrumentalization is a thread that runs through most of the works on apparitions, both those that

focus on one particular apparition and those with comparative aspirations. Some reflection on the relationship between institutionalization and experience is present in virtually all works, although researchers have focused on a number of different issues: the workings of the visionary experience itself and the grounds on which it evolves (Bennett 2012; Carpenter 2011; Carroll 1983, 1985, 1986); theological disputes around visions (Fogleman 2009); the political background and influences of apparitions (Bax 1995; Bennett 2012; Blackburn 1993; Hynes 2008; Scheer 2006); the construction of the authenticity of visions (Apolito 1998; Badone 2007; Berryman 2005a,b); the gendered aspects of apparitions (Badone 2007; Christian 1996, 1989; Van Osselaer 2012); the experience of pilgrims and their role in the development of a given site (Davis and Boles 2003; Harris 2000); the economic aspects of apparition sites (Kaufman 2005); and the global networks of and around Marian apparitions (De la Cruz 2009; Margry 2004; Vásquez and Marquardt 2000).

The last but certainly not the least important general observation is that, at least from the time of the apparitions at Lourdes, apparitional events have become increasingly mimetic. This does not mean that they are devoid of idiosyncratic creativity—on the contrary, each apparition is a site of creative production and reworking of locally important cultural, political, and social themes. However, part of the appeal contemporary apparition sites hold for devotees can be situated in their partaking in what Zimdars-Swartz calls “modern apparition worldviews” (1991) and Apolito terms the “international Catholic visionary culture” (2005). Particular apparition sites are linked together not only through the figure of the Virgin Mary and her symbolic potential, but also through the pilgrimage routes and networks of devotees who perceive Fatima-as-related-to-Lourdes-as-related-to-Medjugorje-as-related-to-Olivetto Citra-as-related-to-Dzhublyk, and so on. The apparition sites are related not only or not even primarily because researchers see specific patterns in their development, but because the devotees see each apparition as a part of a larger network, and because they support the existence of this network with their religious consumer choices.

Later in the book, I shall focus on local interpretations of the Dzhublyk apparitions. In what follows here, however, the most important is a question how and to what extent the apparitions at Dzhublyk fit into the existing models, and what avenues of interpretation are opened by eventual divergences. In my opinion the most widespread line of argumentation—that which takes the initial personal experience of the visionary as (however subjective) fact and

focuses on its transformation into a public event—could not have been convincingly followed in the case of Dzhublyk.

In order to present the Dzhublyk apparitions in relation to modern apparitional patterns, I shall refer to a recent article by David G. Bromley and Rachel S. Bobbitt (2011), who applied a general model of development of new religious movements to thirteen apparitions of the Virgin Mary from 1846 to 1996 in order to identify key factors related to their origination and development. This text is used not because I agree with and pursue their line of argumentation; in fact, a number of their assumptions is questioned. Rather, I use it because it provides a clear and unambiguous framework within which to structure and present my argument.

The Site

According to the inhabitants of Vil'khivka and Nyzhnie Bolotne, the two Transcarpathian villages closest to Dzhublyk, up until August 2002, Dzhublyk was the name of a pleasant if somewhat marshy little meadow with a small spring on the edge of the forest, where local people would go to get clean, refreshing water. It used to be a favorite spot for summer parties where shish kebabs were prepared over open fires, and where one could relax after a week of hard work. Most local people remember the place this way. Others, however, describe Dzhublyk as muddy and dirty, with piles of rubbish left by the picnickers. It was too low-lying and wet to build there, a no-man's-land in between two settlements in which no one really took any interest. But even those with a more negative view agreed that the spring water was clean and tasty, and that for that alone Dzhublyk was worth visiting.

Everything changed after August 27, 2002. Since then, for some the place finally acquired an unexpected, but welcome, purpose; for others it was taken over, stolen from the local people, who could no longer go there for a quiet rest on a sunny day. Starting from August 27, 2002, the news spread that two girls from Nyzhnie Bolotne had met and talked to the Virgin Mary at Dzhublyk. Since then, Dzhublyk is no longer the name of a meadow and a little spring; it is a name of a new and steadily expanding pilgrimage site, known nowadays far beyond the two villages, and responsible for a great deal of controversy in Transcarpathia and beyond.

Bromley and Bobbitt (2011) point out the importance of the physical and economic basis for the development of apparitional movements and sites. They underscore that in all the cases they investigated, people promoting the sites immediately made efforts to mark the sacred space in various ways and to secure an income, by encouraging wealthy supporters, through pilgrims' donations, and the mobilization of volunteer labor. In Dzhublyk this was also of crucial importance. From the very beginning, Dzhublyk was turned into a building site, despite the waterlogged ground and related construction difficulties (figure 2.1 and 2.2). The first wooden chapel was ready just a few weeks after the initial apparition; in January 2003 a larger chapel devoted to the Immaculate Conception was consecrated. On April 28, 2003 the Stations of the Cross were ready, climbing up the hill behind the spring and chapel. In July of the same year the cross for the unity of all Christians was established. Another chapel was consecrated in 2005, and yet another in 2007. In the meantime, cloister buildings for nuns and monks were built, as well as a refectory and a hostel for pilgrims. In August 2008 construction started on a



Figure 2.1 Building site of Dzhublyk,
May 2007



Figure 2.2 The healing bath around a cross in
front of the main chapel at Dzhublyk, June 2011



Figure 2.3 Model for a church to be built at Dzhublyk in the next few years, presented in the canteen at the pilgrimage site, May 2011

huge church that will rival world-famous basilicas in size. It is estimated that it will take at least twenty years to complete (*see figure 2.3*).

In 2010 and 2011 the stations of the life of the Virgin Mary and a wall monument in honor of the underground priest-martyrs were constructed (*see figure 2.4*). Moreover, Dzhublyk-related sacred objects have not been erected exclusively on the site of the original apparition. In 2003 and 2004 fourteen Stations of the Cross were established between L'viv in Ukrainian Galicia and Dzhublyk, as well as other crosses that I shall describe in more detail in Chapter 3.

The question of material support for Dzhublyk is a matter of ongoing controversy. It was impossible for me to determine how much financial support Dzhublyk actually receives and from what sources. The manager of the site,



Figure 2.4 A wall monument to the underground martyrs,
on the way to the main chapel at Dzhublyk, May 2011

Father Atanasii, claims that all funds come directly from pilgrims visiting the site, but his opponents have doubts about this. There is some unconfirmed gossip about sponsorship from Ukrainian emigrant communities. In any case, very early in the history of Dzhublyk the production of all kinds of devotional artifacts began. These are sold in a shop at the site: calendars, prayer books, CDs and DVDs, pictures with Dzhublyk as the main theme. The shop also sells general religious books, rosaries, crosses, statues, and the like. The residents of Nyzhnie Bolotne and some other villages are another important source of support, providing donations of food, cleaning supplies, petrol, means of transport, and, most importantly, labor.

Studies of Marian apparitions usually start with descriptions of the visionaries—their backgrounds and the events leading up to the visions (e.g., Bennett 2012). I start my description from the material presence of Dzhublyk as a location, because its existence and its rapid transformation from a marshy meadow into a pilgrimage center are the most important points in arguments between supporters and opponents over the future of Dzhublyk. In the face of all the controversies surrounding Dzhublyk, and the fact that the visionaries themselves occupy a very marginal position in the management of the site (*see*

below), the significance of Dzhublyk as a physical site of pilgrimage and religious cult grew precisely because of its material presence. With every new cross, chapel, building, bath, gate, and fence that gets built, the existence of Dzhublyk is confirmed and legitimized.

Although the construction of physical structures has become the most important strategy in the management of Dzhublyk, it is also a controversial strategy. According to Father Atanasii, who at present manages the site, everything that is built at Dzhublyk is done at the express bidding of the Virgin Mary, combined with his own passion for building. In response to my question concerning the planning and architecture of Dzhublyk buildings, he answered in 2007:

We have the Mother of God, we have a computer, we have architecture software in this computer, and we just draw there [he laughs]. We do it ourselves. With the Virgin Mary. And then Mary blesses it—she says that this is exactly how it should be. Or she says, “You have to add something.” And then we add some elements. And then she says, “Yes, it is finished. It should look like this.” And then we build it. And if, as we are building each floor, each element, we have doubts, we ask her. For example, we asked how high the monastery should be, how many floors. And she said, “This is enough, please put a roof on it now. If I let you do as you wish, you would build four more floors!” [He laughs again.]

I followed up with a question about how detailed Mary was with her advice, and Father Atanasii replied:

You know, building has been my hobby since childhood. It was my favorite occupation. When I was a student in Warsaw¹⁰ we took excursions to many pilgrimage sites in Poland, and I always paid attention to architecture. It was important because I knew that when I came back to Transcarpathia, there would be the need to restore a monastery in Boroniava. I was building it for

¹⁰ Many members of the Order of Saint Basil the Great (OSBM, commonly called “Basilians”) from Ukraine received part of their religious education in Poland, in a Basilian monastery, at the Warsaw Theological Academy, as well as in monasteries in Kętrzyn, Przemyśl, and Węgorzewo.

four years.¹¹ This is probably how the Virgin Mary was preparing me for Dzhublyk. And now we build together—she manages and I build.

Father Atanasii's construction projects are an extremely important part of the negotiations around Dzhublyk. He links them explicitly to the presence of the transcendental figure of Mary. The buildings are presented not as practical solutions to the provision of worship space for pilgrims, but rather as the fulfillment of the Virgin Mary's explicit wishes. They are, therefore, proof of her presence, as she is the one who guides Father Atanasii in the preparation of the building plans. For example, the healing bath around the cross (see figure 2.2) was also designed by the Virgin Mary. As Father Atanasii explained:

I had a specialist here who knows how to build pools. This was in autumn, a year and a half ago. And Olena [the visionary] was with us and we were standing here. There was nothing here, just a cross on flat ground. And we considered making a pool here, maybe an oval one that people could bathe in and ask for healing, as is often done in holy places. And Olena comes to us and says, "The Virgin Mary says that the pool has to be round and it has to be built around the cross, and in this pool people have to circumambulate the cross thirty-three times while walking in the water and praying. Thirty-three times because of the age of Jesus Christ. And the Mother of God promises a healing." And this then was for me a task for the whole winter, how to make here this round pool around the cross, in a place where there is no water.

The various edifices are used in a number of ways in support of arguments both supporting and challenging the site. For the most devoted supporters, the building activities at Dzhublyk provide the most compelling proof that accusations concerning fraud or misappropriation of funds at the site are unjustified. It is obvious, supporters say, that everything is invested in construction work. Supporters also point to the physical growth of Dzhublyk as proof of the veracity of the apparitions—under such difficult economic conditions as exist in Ukraine, who would be able to build so fast and so well without the help of God and his messengers? Still, not everyone is pleased

¹¹ Before coming to Dzhublyk, Father Atanasii had been the head of an important Basilian monastery in Boroniava, as I explain in greater detail below.

with Father Atanasii's building enthusiasm. For the opponents of the site, especially for those who see the apparitions as a hoax, all of the construction activity is obviously just an attempt to secure a position among Transcarpathian pilgrimage sites. Moreover, even for those who believe in the veracity of the apparitions, the construction boom at Dzhublyk can be seen as unnecessarily excessive. I have heard many times that, on the first day after the initial apparitions, the visionaries reported that the Virgin Mary requested that only a small wooden chapel be built at Dzhublyk. The present construction activities are also controversial because the structures erected there have not been authorized by the local bishop. Nor do they have proper building permits from the local state administration. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, at least until 2011, they were erected without any official documentation at all. Therefore, the transcendental legitimation through the Virgin Mary has been the only form of permission that Father Atanasii could openly mobilize.

This has proved to be a very successful strategy, and can be seen as a continuation of a local tradition of using religious symbols to claim ownership of contested places. It is common in Transcarpathia for a cross to be erected on a given site as a way of resolving, or rather, preventing property conflicts. Often in cases of especially valuable or contested land, the cross is the first structure erected, even before the formal right of use is confirmed by the appropriate authorities. For example, in the regional center of Irshava, the first object erected on the border of a plot where a new shop was to be built was a huge cross. The owner wanted to secure the land while the documents were being processed, and while he was still securing resources for the investment. Locally, the removal of a cross is considered a grave sin, as is illustrated by the countless narratives concerning Communists in Soviet times who were suddenly struck by misfortune after destroying or removing crosses. Dzhublyk, as an assortment of sacred objects, cannot be easily removed now, despite any convictions and future church judgments regarding the veracity of the apparitions.

The Visionaries and the Managers

As mentioned above, virtually every book or article on Marian apparitions, regardless of whether the given publication is of an academic or a devotional character, starts from the visionary or visionaries and sometimes also ends

with the visionaries. It seems that for most authors of academic works, the analysis should answer the question of how some kind of personal, subjective experience becomes a public event. There are also works that focus almost exclusively on the psychological aspects of visionary experiences (Carroll 1983, 1986; Horsfall 2000; Taves 2009), or show how such experiences helped the visionaries deal with a difficult past or a challenging present (Carroll 1985; Zimdars-Swartz 1991). This focus on the experiences of visionaries as the starting point of research on apparitions has been confirmed more recently by one of the most productive researchers in this area, William Christian, who has been writing for decades on the social context and conditions for the public promulgation of apparitions and similar phenomena. In 2009 he published a brief article that focuses entirely on visionary, or more precisely, unusual multisensory experiences. He shows that researchers can know about only a small fraction of visions, as most go either unreported or rejected at the most local level. According to Christian, those visions about which books are written are “survivors of a series of filters that remove a large number of other unusual sensory events before they reach the public and the media” (2009: 163). He insists that in order to understand the process of the social construction of all kinds of unusual sensory experiences, we should stop insisting on calling them “visions” (because different senses can also be involved) and “religious” (because the unusual experiences are not necessarily socially constructed within the religious realm), and we should be aware that we are probably dealing only with the tip of the iceberg. In this way, he reaffirmed the emphasis on the experience of a given person as central in the study of apparitional phenomena. The direction of study he suggests is from experience to public presence. In my opinion, in some cases the direction should be reversed, moving from the public presence to unusual multisensory experiences.

One important example of this focus on unusual multisensory experiences as the basis of apparitional phenomena is a series of conferences and a network of cooperation among researchers that was initiated by William Christian and Gábor Klaniczay in 2004 (Christian and Klaniczay 2009). The focus on the experiential dimension is here further strengthened by adding to the usual historical and social approaches to apparitional and similar phenomena “neurobiological observations and theories about the ‘non-classical’ uses of the eye, the human visual system and vision ‘detecting the unseen gaze’, functional neuroimaging in visual imagery or the ‘placebo’ effect, to identify the physio-

logical limits and constants and the cognitive frameworks of this particular cultural and religious syndrome” (2009: 9). This approach seems to fit well with the growing literature on learning and training in religious contexts that explicitly deals with particular socially developed and transmitted techniques aimed at helping an individual experience the divine in a particular way (Luhmann 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2012; Naumescu 2012). I find these works enlightening and I agree, as discussed in the Introduction, that experience in many cases can be treated as the basis of what is ultimately institutionalized as religion. Still, the Dzhublyk apparition site, although explicitly based on the experiences of the visionaries, cannot be analyzed in ways suggested by such works for at least two reasons. First, there are considerable doubts concerning the features of the experiences on which the site has been based. Second, the way in which the site has actually developed and the way in which it is judged by the church have little to do with the experiences of the two visionaries. If any experience deemed religious is important at Dzhublyk, it is the experience of the pilgrims.

Bromley and Bobbitt (2011) point out that apparitions usually occur in situations of crisis that can be described on the macro-social, micro-social, and personal levels, the last one referring primarily to the lives of the visionaries. It is widely assumed that the visions come about in a moment of particular existential stress for a given person. Bromley and Bobbitt also assert that the visionary experience leads to the visionaries gaining some kind of elevated status, despite their lack of credentials to assert a greater charismatic authority (2011: 14). At first sight, the Dzhublyk visionaries would appear to conform to the stereotype of the contemporary Marian visionary presented at the beginning of this chapter: the visionaries were two girls, nine and ten years old, born and brought up in the village of Nyzhnie Bolotne, which is known as a relatively remote, traditional, and religious place. Marianka is one of five children of Father Petro, a Greek Catholic priest who lives in Nyzhnie Bolotne but serves in other Transcarpathian parishes. Her mother also comes from a family of clergymen—Marianka’s maternal uncle is a priest, as was her deceased maternal grandfather. The fact that Marianka comes from a family of clergymen is probably the most significant part of her biography in this context. The mother of the second visionary, Olenka, came from Kazakhstan, where she spent her childhood and youth, to Nyzhnie Bolotne about fifteen years before the first apparitions. She is Ukrainian, as is Olenka’s father, a local man from Nyzhnie Bolotne, who has spent most of his adult life working away from home, mostly

abroad, as many men from this village do. At the time of the apparitional events, he was in Spain. The only trait that somehow differentiated Olenka's mother from other inhabitants of Nyzhnie Bolotne was her relative indifference to religion, at least up to the time of the apparitions.

I met with both visionaries, and I had plenty of opportunities to talk to and observe both of them, albeit in different contexts. I visited Olenka at her home on a number of occasions, where I talked to her, her mother, and her grandmother. I also ran into her frequently at Dzhublyk. For a few weeks I lived with Marianka's family. Still, I did not talk much with the two visionaries about their apparitional experiences. Olenka told me politely, but firmly, that she approves of the version of events that is presented by Father Atanasii in publications sold at the apparition site. In matters concerning religion, Marianka always referred me to her father. She was interested in talking to me, but more about a collection of music CDs she saw in my car or her future plans concerning her choice of profession. I did not insist on conducting interviews with the visionaries or on talking about religious matters with them when they wanted to change the subject. Apart from respect for their choice, I felt a degree of anxiety about my lack of psychological training and experience in dealing with children and teenagers. Despite the fact that for the past 150 years, many, if not the majority, of documented visionaries have been children, there is still little analysis of the impact that the socially recognized status of visionary might have on a child's psychology.

One could, of course, try to find some particular signs of personal crisis in the lives of the two visionaries, but their biographies have not been thoroughly examined in the devotional literature or among the pilgrims. On the other hand, one could interpret the relative unremarkability of the visionaries as a simple issue of representation—they are like everyone else, therefore they stand for everyone and the visions have been directed to everyone. However, perhaps in the case of Dzhublyk, the "unusual multisensory experience" of the seers was relatively unimportant in the process of site development. Actually, the most idiosyncratic—and for many also the most disturbing—feature of Dzhublyk is the relative lack of presence of the visionaries at the site. Both visionaries were for all intents and purposes cut out of the public presence very early on in the development of the site. They never spoke publicly, always whispering the messages of the Virgin Mary into the ear of a priest when in public. Both were approached by pilgrims individually with particular questions, and in those cases they would sometimes speak directly

to the devotees, but more often they preferred to call a priest for assistance. Moreover, while Olenka is still present at the site and is at least known to the pilgrims as a visionary, Marianka stopped going to the site in spring 2003. In 2008 she began visiting the site in Dzhublyk again, but is rarely recognized as a visionary and, as far as I could observe, does not lay claim to any kind of visionary authority at the site.

The most important figures at Dzhublyk are therefore not the girl-visionaries, but the priest-managers. From the very beginning of the Dzhublyk apparitions, there were clearly two prominent managerial figures present: Father Petro, the biological father of Marianka and a Greek Catholic priest, and Father Atanasii, head of the monastery in Boroniava, one of the most important Basilian monasteries in Transcarpathia, at the time of the first apparitions. Father Petro and Father Atanasii are distant cousins, both born in Nyzhnie Bolotne. During the first months of the apparitions they managed the site together. But in spring 2003 there was a disagreement between the two men, and Father Petro withdrew from the site, taking Marianka with him. There is plenty of gossip concerning the reasons for their quarrel, and financial matters are a prominent theme. Still, they both explicitly say that the cause of their split-up was a disagreement over the visionary experiences—apparently, Marianka's experiences were called into question by Father Atanasii, who announced publicly (after consultations with the Virgin Mary through Olenka) that Marianka does not converse with the Virgin Mary anymore. Locally, from the point of view of many observers with whom I talked, this declaration was the result of a power struggle between the two clergymen, who were not ready to share control of the apparition site.

However, according to both Father Petro and Marianka, Marianka continues to receive messages at home, and some pilgrims visit her there. Her visionary practice is closely intertwined with the spiritual practice of her father, who hears confessions, prays over people, and even experiments with exorcism, while Marianka is asked to pose questions to the Virgin Mary concerning particular cases and problems. At the moment, ten years after the initial apparitions, it can be said that it is Father Petro, not Marianka, who is the main attraction for people visiting their house. I spent some time living there, and it seemed to me that Marianka's communications with the Virgin Mary were more a technology of healing, conversion, and spiritual help that Father Petro used in his clerical practice than a separate focus of devotional attention.

At Dzhublyk itself, the most important figure is therefore Father Atanasii, and he is closely linked to Olenka, the second visionary. She was frequently present

at the apparition site until the beginning of her studies in L'viv in 2010. Now she visits the site only on holy days. In her case as well, the Virgin Mary's messages are not communicated directly and in public, but almost always through the middleman, Father Atanasii. She is better known and recognized by the pilgrims than Marianka, and the pilgrims often seek direct contact with her; in such cases a conversation can sometimes take place without a middleman.

Throughout my research, the only manager of the site has been Father Atanasii. According to his own statements, he appeared at Dzhublyk on the third day after the initial apparition, and since then managed to establish himself as the main personage at the site, being definitely more noticed and revered by the pilgrims than either of the visionaries. He is the focus of the most fervent emotions and arguments around Dzhublyk, considered almost a saint by some, while mockingly called "the Pope of Dzhublyk" by others. It can be said that nothing happens at Dzhublyk without his knowledge. One of the priests from the eparchial center discussed the relationships between visionaries and managers at Dzhublyk. My interlocutor believed that the Virgin Mary did appear to the two girls at Dzhublyk, but added:

"The thing is that the moment has come when not everything that Father Atanasii reports as said by the Mother of God has been really said by her. The first case and the first bad tendencies started when the human aspects of Father Atanasii's activities were noticed by Bishop Marhitych.¹² Those were the first signs and signals. And the second moment for me, you have to see it as the work of the Devil, he will always try to undermine, to bring to the fore such moments and factors that are against Dzhublyk spirituality.... And in such moments it is really sinful not to provide the girls [visionaries] with excellent spiritual guidance [which was not provided]. And how did it end? One girl only hears and the second does not hear and does not see.... And they both saw and heard [the Virgin Mary]! You have to understand, the girls are also human; they can be taken over by pride. I am seeing the Virgin Mary! But they could also accept this gift with humility. They could be wise. But for this they needed adequate spiritual guidance, a spiritual person (*dukhivnyk*) to call things for them by their real names. "You cannot do this; you cannot do that." But Father Atanasii declared the girls the absolute prophets (*veshchiteli*) of God's word, and the girls gave themselves over to arrogance. Following from that,

¹² I introduce this important personage in more detail in the next chapter.

they started to speak out not the words of the Virgin Mary, but what they thought were the words of the Virgin Mary! I have talked to people, who went to the girls to learn about God's will and they were giving them contradictory or senseless advice. This was a clear sign that the situation is out of control. Now Father Atanasii has decided to isolate the girls a little, and he became some kind of Dzhublyk pope who can speak *ex cathedra*! And what has happened?"

According to my interlocutor, as a result, the devotions and ideas transmitted through the site are either on the verge of heresy or are contradictory, which makes the management of the site on the part of the church an especially delicate issue. Still, at present Atanasii is the head of a newly established eparchial monastic order at Dzhublyk. According to him, everything he does at Dzhublyk is ordered by the Virgin Mary through Olenka, but he is the executor of the divine will. He told me that the Virgin Mary told him through Olenka as early as the first week of the apparitions, "I will manage and you will build." He says that for the past ten years he has only been doing his best to fulfill her wishes. He is also treated with veneration by many pilgrims and members of organizations that support Dzhublyk. For example, the most recent issue of the booklet narrating the history of the apparition site, which also contains witnesses' accounts of various miraculous events related to the site, contains the following account of a miracle related by an inhabitant of Nyzhnie Bolotne:

When Father Atanasii was giving the Eucharist to the people, I saw a cross on his head, which shined as if made of gold. At first I got scared, and the cross disappeared. And I started to have doubts as to whether I really saw it—maybe it was just a ray of light from the sun. I started to look at other people, but I did not see such a thing on anyone else. And then I saw the cross again when he [Father Atanasii] went to give the Eucharist to the next person. And I doubted again, and the cross disappeared. And then again, he went to the third person with the Eucharist and I saw the cross again.... I have considered long and hard what it could have meant, this vision of mine. I do not know. Still, I thank God that he gave us Father Atanasii and that the Virgin Mary selected this place and him. (Tsyipesh 2010: 71)

Was there at the beginning, in fact, a personal religious experience on the part of the two girls at the Dzhublyk site? There is a rumor circulating among the adversaries of Dzhublyk that one of the priests involved in the initial events

admitted to a group of higher church officials that the girls were talked into reporting the vision. When I confronted an eparchial spokesman about this, he neither confirmed nor denied it, but instead said that in such a situation all people involved are under so much stress and pressure that many different things can be said. Even if such a declaration happened, one should not take it at face value. This answer was one of many instances that indicated, in my opinion, the relative unimportance of initial visionary experiences for the institutionalization and organizational embracement of the apparitions. From the point of view of the church hierarchy, the validity of the Dzhublyk apparitions has not been judged primarily on the veracity of the initial vision, but rather on local politics, the influence the site has had on pilgrims, and its perceived benefit for the church.

The Messages and the Visions

You know, there is something about Dzhublyk that disturbs me....In Medjugorje, the Virgin Mary appears and says everything in a way that is accessible to people. We do not have this at Dzhublyk. We do not know what to say, why it is so....This is not a private matter of Marianka or Olenka. Those are messages for all the people. And those messages should be disseminated. In Medjugorje, the Virgin Mary appears. She can be seen only by the visionaries, but the messages are given for all the people. And in Dzhublyk there are no such messages. Why?

This is a statement from a long-term supporter of the Dzhublyk site living in L'viv, who also organizes pilgrimages to the site. She indicated here that she does not know how to explain to people who travel with her as new pilgrims to the Dzhublyk site that the form of communication with the Virgin Mary there differs significantly from what they know from other apparition sites. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, cross-referencing between apparition sites is a very important feature of contemporary devotion. Indeed, if one reads leaflets published at Dzhublyk or listens to the narratives concerning the site, and compares them to the model of modern Marian apparitions that has developed over the last 150 years, one is immediately struck by the contrast in the mode of delivery and the content of the messages from the Virgin Mary. Generally the length, elaborateness, and number of

messages delivered by the Virgin Mary have increased from the early modern apparitions in the nineteenth century to the present. While in 1858 in Lourdes, the Virgin Mary appeared eighteen times but spoke rarely, at the recent apparition site in Medjugorje, hundreds of messages have been delivered so far, and the flow continues. Those messages have rarely been analyzed in academic works, although they form the bulk of the devotional literature. Clemens Cavallin, himself analyzing hermeneutically the countless messages from the Virgin Mary and Jesus written down by the contemporary visionary Vassula Ryden, says that many authors deem such messages too dull and repetitive to be the subject of analysis (Cavallin 2007). And yet, for the devotees, the messages seem to be one of the most important aspects of the apparitions. The messages from Medjugorje, Garabandal, and Amsterdam, the long books of communications written down by Stefano Gobbi and by the very Vassula Ryden analyzed by Cavallin are distributed through the “network of divergent Marian devotion” (Margry 2004) and, as I witnessed many times during my research, are actually read and reflected upon.

To see an example of a typical Medjugorje message, it is enough to have a look at the medjugorje.org website for any given day. The latest message for the day when I was writing the present chapter was as follows:

Dear children! With great hope in the heart, today I again call you to prayer. If you pray, little children, you are with me and you are seeking the will of my Son and are living it. Be open and live prayer and, at every moment, may it be for you the savior and joy of your soul. I am with you and I intercede for all of you before my Son, Jesus. Thank you for having responded to my call.

Dzhublyk does not provide this type of embellished, often apocalyptic, repetitive message. Instead, the communications with the Virgin Mary that are included in the publications at Dzhublyk are rather down-to-earth orders by the Virgin Mary concerning appropriate behavior at the site, the timing of the next liturgy, or the next building endeavor. They are rarely direct quotes from her speech, but instead they are filtered through the narrative provided by Father Atanasii, who is the author of virtually all the materials concerning Dzhublyk sold or distributed at the site. Even in booklets containing the history of the apparitions, the Virgin Mary rarely initiates the communication, but rather answers questions, most often posed by Father Atanasii and asked through Olenka. To give an example:

Q.: Please ask the Blessed Mother of God why there are such cases in the life of Christian people that they, despite being baptized, despite confession and the Eucharist, are still seized by the evil spirits.

A.: The evil spirit is very deceitful and sneaky, but if people go to confession and take the Eucharist, the evil spirit will abandon them. A person can free himself from an evil spirit through those actions, because the evil spirit cannot remain inside a person who takes the Eucharist. (Tsyipesh 2010: 23)

The person asking is Father Atanasii, and the person answering is Olenka, evidently channeling the words of the Virgin Mary. The private communications of the pilgrims with the visionaries also take the form of question-and-answer sessions in which the Virgin Mary gives specific instructions for particular people. The messages of the Virgin Mary are very rarely communicated publicly to everyone at a gathering. When I asked Olenka about the form and content of the messages, she gave the usual answer—that it was the Virgin Mary's wish that the messages be communicated first to the priests and not made public directly. After all, according to the main message of the apparitions, one of the main purposes of the Virgin Mary's appearance was to restore the authority of the priests.

I would like to highlight here a crucial difference between Dzhublyk and the sites analyzed by Bromley and Bobbitt (2011), as well as many other modern sites not mentioned by them. At least from the time of the apparition at Lourdes, the meetings between the visionary and the transcendental figure became occasions of ritualized worship that were the focus of the pilgrimage—as long as the visions continued. People gathered to witness the moment when the visionaries would see the Virgin Mary; they engaged in the creation of the apparition through their interactions with the visionaries and the signs of transcendental presence (Bitel 2009; Davis and Boles 2003). The pilgrims in Dzhublyk also play an important role because they are the ones who detect and demonstrate transcendent power, looking for the signs and sharing their stories of healing and conversion. Still, the visionaries' meetings with the Virgin Mary are not a part of public performances, which undoubtedly is related to the relatively marginal position that the visionaries themselves have at the site. Father Atanasii's rather hurried decision to negotiate with church authorities, and the decision of Bishop Milan Šašik to keep the site under church control instead of dismissing the claims and refusing to recognize the site, resulted in a focus on standard Catholic practices (Holy Mass, the rosary,

the Stations of the Cross), and not on the institutionalization of apparitional events.

Bromley and Bobbitt (2011) assert that the messages that are given to visionaries during apparitions are a crucial factor in the development of an apparition site and the related religious movement. The authors say that initial messages tend to be general calls for more faith and prayer, and to live pure lives, while later messages connect the given apparition to broader but precise social and political issues (2011: 21). Therefore, apparitions at Fatima deliver messages concerning the dangers of modernity and communism (Bennett 2012); in Lourdes, the story concerns the struggles of French Catholicism in the aftermath of revolutionary turmoil (Harris 2000); and in Medjugorje, many messages were from the very beginning relevant to the general Croatian nationalist discourse (Bax 1995; Skrbiš 2005). In Dzhublyk, general messages calling for love, greater faith, and penance are rare. Instead, the messages of Dzhublyk are infrequent, brief, specific, and directly related to local concerns. There is, however, one overarching message coming out of Dzhublyk, which guides the structure of this book: the message concerning the need for unification of the church and of the people (*narod*), and for elevating the authority of the priests. This message, connecting the site to broader but precise social and political issues, was delivered at the very beginning of the apparitions and was quickly institutionalized into the motto of the site.

While the verbal content of encounters with the Virgin Mary at Dzhublyk is rather simple, additions to the devotional repertoire are nevertheless made. This happens through visions and other sensory experiences that are not restricted to the two visionaries. Most importantly, while the Virgin Mary was the subject of the initial apparition and remains the principal contact for the visionaries, Dzhublyk was also blessed with apparitions of other holy figures, Jesus and St. Joseph being the most prominent among them, but by no means the only ones. There have also been sightings of angels, other saints, and Greek Catholic martyrs. While for most pilgrims Dzhublyk is still primarily a site of the apparition of the Virgin Mary, Father Atanasii and his closest associates promote it as a site of the apparition of the Holy Family. The apparitions of Jesus and Saint Joseph started to take place in September 2002, that is, almost from the very beginning of the apparitional events at Dzhublyk, but they were highlighted only gradually in Dzhublyk's promotional materials. There are multiple possible interpretations of this gradual amendment or even replacement of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Family. The explicit interpretation of

Father Atanasii has to do with a wish to underscore the role of the family in society. This is understandable in the context of Transcarpathia, from where many people go abroad on temporary work contracts, which results in family members living apart for months or even years at a time.

Another interpretation centers on discussions concerning the role of women within the church. There is an ongoing discussion both in the social sciences and in theological literature concerning the status of the Virgin Mary in Catholic religious life. Is she an emancipatory figure for women or confirmation of patriarchal oppression (Loizos 1991; Warner 2000)? In the case of Dzhublyk, the gradual replacement of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Family can be read as a process of removing a female figure from the center of devotional attention in the face of the growing emancipation and influence of women in religious life. Women are clearly dominant in religious life in Transcarpathia in terms of lay involvement in devotional practice—they are the ones who pray, go on pilgrimages, and attend church holidays. Still, thus far they have had little official say in church matters, not only because there are no female priests, but also because women were customarily not elected to church councils. The Catholic women in Transcarpathia still largely accept male dominance, but some subversive practices have emerged in recent years. There are interesting movements within the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia that point to significant gender-related shifts in reconfigurations of power relationships (*see* Halemba 2012 for details).

The effort to displace the Virgin Mary as the central figure may also be a way of removing the apparition site from the transnational network of Marian devotion. As mentioned earlier, Dzhublyk diverges in significant ways from the model of Marian apparitions that serves as a reference for many devotees visiting the site. The change in focus to the Holy Family can be seen as a managerial strategy that could potentially emancipate Dzhublyk from constant comparisons to and the mimetic requirements of other Marian sites, thereby giving more autonomy to the site's manager in his negotiations with the Greek Catholic Church.

While the messages from the Virgin Mary have been gradually marginalized in managerial narratives concerning Dzhublyk, the non-verbal signs of divine presence have taken on even greater significance. On the one hand, this can be interpreted historically as a result of Orthodox Christian influences on the site. In Orthodoxy in general, the Virgin Mary has only rarely been known to appear and deliver verbal messages; more often an icon of the Virgin Mary is

encountered, and not herself as a person talking, smiling, and even touching the visionaries. This resonates with semiotic ideology (Keane 2003) that seems to be widespread within Orthodox Christianity, where the aim is to maintain a distinction between a holy “prototype” and objects, such as icons that render this invisible prototype visible (Luehrmann 2010). This results in an approach to material objects that treats them as indications of transcendence abductively related to the prototype, but emphatically not identical to it. As Sonya Luehrmann writes, referring to Hans Belting, “The icon is necessary to the worshipper because it is an index of the presence of God’s grace, but the worshipper is also enjoined to remember constantly that the source of this grace is God, not the image itself” (2010: 59). The Virgin Mary of the apparitions is at least as antithetical to this way of understanding the relationship between the image and the transcendent being as the statues, rejected in Orthodox theology, because the literal representation can lead a worshiper to confuse the prototype with an image and representation with a presence (Mahieu 2010; Morgan 2009). The Virgin Mary that appears and talks to people directly without use of traditional symbolic conventions does not fit well with Orthodox semiotic ideology. It can of course be said that the model of Virgin Mary apparitions provides such a symbolic convention; still it is, first, a Catholic model and, second, a model that pretends that the mediation through material form does not take place (cf. Meyer 2011 on religion and mediation).

There are various ways in which divine presence can be marked at the pilgrimage site. At Dzhublyk, in December 2003, the crucifix in front of the main chapel started to shed blood; a month later, two more crucifixes established along the road leading to Dzhublyk also started to bleed. Experts from two different laboratories invited independently by one of the followers and by Father Atanasii confirmed that the traces on the crosses “contain elements of blood.”¹³ There are miracles connected with many objects erected at the site. For example, the wooden figures of the Virgin Mary and Jesus prepared especially for the site have cross-shaped marks on their hearts (*see figure 2.5*) that, as the sculptor and author of the statues, Peter Malt, confirmed in conversation with me, appeared without his intervention and cannot have occurred as a feature of the wood itself.

¹³ Personal communication with Father Atanasii and the follower who ordered the analysis. See also Balandiukh [no date].



Figure 2.5 Statue of Jesus in the main chapel at Dzhublyk, May 2007

Many people have visions at the site, most commonly of “the spheres of Dzhublyk” —circular lights visible among the trees—and the “dancing sun”—unusual movements of the sun. Both phenomena are known at many apparition sites at least since the apparitions at Fatima in Portugal in 1917, where the so-called miracle of the sun became the turning point in the development of this apparition site (Bennett 2012). Many people also smell incense at Dzhublyk despite the fact that, following a wish of the Virgin Mary, it is not used during liturgies.

Such miracles are institutionalized and stories about them are told and retold in countless narratives circulating among the followers and in Dzhublyk-generated publications. A group of people looking at the sun in hopes of seeing some extraordinary phenomenon is a common scene at Dzhublyk (see figure 2.6), as it is at other apparition sites worldwide. The pilgrims are encouraged to recount their experiences to Father Atanasii or one of the younger monks,



Figure 2.6 Pilgrims looking at the sky and sun at Dzhublyk, August 2008

and their narratives are subsequently included in Dzhublyk publications. A typical witness accounts reads as follows:

During the Divine Liturgy that was conducted by a priest from L'viv I saw different signs in various colors in the sun; this was so beautiful that we could not stop watching. And then the sun came closer to the people and the longer we looked, the more visible became the signs, and we saw a huge cross on the sun. At first the cross was green, then blue, the same color as on the phelonion¹⁴ of Father Atanasii. (Tsyipesh 2010: 70)

As William Christian (2009) suggested, such reported multisensory experiences are probably only the tip of the iceberg. Although, as noted above, the experiences of the visionaries are not at the center of the apparition site at Dzhublyk, the experiences of pilgrims visiting the site are crucial to legitimizing the site's existence. Some of them are collected at the site and subsequently published in booklets and leaflets; others never get recorded in this way, even if there are attempts to share them with other devotees. For example, during the anniversary of the apparitions in August 2008, I was an unwitting participant in the process

¹⁴ A liturgical vestment in Eastern Christian tradition.

of the development, interpretation, and rejection of such an experience. After an evening liturgy, while still standing in the crowd in front of the chapel at Dzhublyk, a girl from Nyzhnie Bolotne apparently experienced the presence of Jesus within her body. I was standing on a balcony above the crowd, recording and taking photos. The mother of the girl was standing next to me. Suddenly, she directed me toward her daughter and said, "Look what is happening to her!" The girl was kneeling with her head in her hands, and we could hear her tormented voice saying, "I am Jesus! Why do not you pray?" (*Ia Isus! Chomu ne molytesia?*). We were on our way downstairs toward her when she suddenly got up and started running into the woods. Her mother asked me to follow her and make sure she was alright, while the mother went on to gather a few people, who would, it turned out, serve as both helpers to restrain the disturbed girl and as witnesses to her words and actions. I ran after the girl, who collapsed onto the forest floor after running a few dozen meters, all the time talking about being Jesus and calling people to prayer and penance. After a short while her mother and a few other people from Nyzhnie Bolotne found us. They seemed very much ready to confirm the veracity of the girl's experience and immediately following the celebrations looked for Father Atanasii to introduce the case to him. I could not be present during his conversation with the girl, but later I found out that he dismissed her experience, suggesting that it could have been caused by exhaustion or even the work of Devil. The mother accepted his decision.

Networks of Support and Transnational Connections

Bromley and Bobbitt assert that support networks are critical for the development of Marian apparitional sites (2011: 14). This clearly seems the case at Dzhublyk as well. On the 27th of every month buses full of pilgrims arrive at Dzhublyk, and every year on August 27 thousands of people gather at the site to participate in the anniversary of the apparition, which is celebrated with fireworks. In Chapter 3 I describe how the visionaries, when asked for proof of the veracity of their accounts, told Bishop Ivan Marhitych that the fact that people would come to Dzhublyk in large numbers without being summoned or encouraged should serve as proof. Here, I introduce briefly various groups of people who come to Dzhublyk.

Both opponents and supporters of Dzhublyk admit that, without a network of devoted defenders, the apparition site would not stand a chance of surviving. There are at least two crucial strands of support for Dzhublyk: local and trans-regional. The local strand is focused on a group of inhabitants from Nyzhnie Bolotne, the village where the visionaries and both managers were born. This group of devotees formed in the days immediately following the initial apparitions. People who are skeptical about Dzhublyk or who are critical of Father Atanasii point out that the group is composed mainly of Father Atanasii's relatives. But this alone is not enough to explain their support, as Nyzhnie Bolotne is a tight local community where virtually everyone can be said to be related through kinship ties. The local group of Dzhublyk supporters eventually organized the Brotherhood of the Holy Family, a non-governmental organization that supports the site by collecting donations, providing food to pilgrims, helping with the maintenance of the site, lobbying, and supporting Father Atanasii in his dealings with state organs, the courts, and the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo. They also help in securing building materials, managing the construction work at the site, and organizing transportation. The head of the organization was a lay person from the village, but Father Atanasii himself recently became its official head.

A youth organization called The Children of the Holy Family also has a very important role in the development of Dzhublyk. This organization grew out of a group of children who started gathering at Dzhublyk just after the first apparitions. The children are peers of the visionaries, and most of their parents belong to the Brotherhood of the Holy Family. They remember the first weeks and months after the initial apparition as a very intense time: children and teenagers would gather at the site and stay there until late into the night, praying, singing, and talking. These children and teenagers have proved to be of great help—they welcome pilgrims, assist at the liturgies, and, very importantly, form a circle of support for Olenka and Father Atanasii. The members of the Children of the Holy Family play an important role in organizing the annual youth meetings that contribute to the popularity, stability, and legitimation of Dzhublyk in ways that go far beyond the initial visionary experiences.

The annual youth meetings actually bring together the local and transregional support networks. The meetings are held immediately prior to the celebration of the anniversary of the apparitions, and both local organizations are very much involved in the preparation, from providing food for the participants to

preparing and executing the program of the meetings. This includes, in addition to divine liturgies and other organized prayer sessions, athletic and musical competitions, excursions, and entertainment. Most of the guests for the youth days come in organized groups, but other people of all ages come as well, both individually and in groups. While the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church¹⁵ does not actively support pilgrimages to Dzhublyk, there are several lay believers who do organize such pilgrimages. Local supporters of Dzhublyk admit that the backing and assistance Dzhublyk has received from the Ternopil' and Ivano-Frankivsk regions of western Ukraine have been critical to its survival. Buses full of pilgrims from this part of the country appeared at Dzhublyk days after the initial apparitions, and they still constitute the most devoted followers. Their presence is crucial for understanding the significance of Dzhublyk in the history and present-day status of Transcarpathia in Ukraine, and of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy in particular.

There are also hints of various transnational networks that have been mobilized in relation to the apparitions, although they are not as clearly visible at the site. My own research confirms the existence of connections between Dzhublyk and neighboring countries, especially Slovakia, from where buses full of pilgrims also arrive for the anniversary celebrations. Three weeks after the initial apparition in Dzhublyk, the Virgin Mary appeared to a Basilian nun at a place called Pri Brale, which is just across the border in Slovakia. The veracity of this apparition was challenged by the local Greek Catholic hierarchy, but the site has survived this initial hardship, though on a much smaller scale than Dzhublyk (Halemba 2008c,e). What is important for my argument is that in the initial years the managers of the two sites met, visited each other, and made plans for cooperation. Those plans were interrupted for a number of reasons, most importantly because of disagreements concerning the leadership: the visionary at Pri Brale apparently felt that she, as a nun, an adult, and the visionary, should have the upper decision-making position, but Father Atanasii could not agree to that. In 2010, Pri Brale and Dzhublyk started to communicate again, with, as yet, unclear outcomes. In my opinion, one important factor leading to the reestablishment of contact between the two sites was the fact that, in 2010, the managers of the Slovakian apparition site finally managed to convince the local Greek Catholic eparchy in Košice to start an official investi-

¹⁵ In the next chapter, I explain the relationships between the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo in detail.

gation into their case, after almost eight years during which a strict ban on visiting the site had been issued by the local bishop (see Halemba 2008c,e). Dzhublyk, on the other hand, managed to enter into lasting negotiations with the local bishop after only a few initial months of struggle, and did not want to jeopardize its chances by establishing a relationship with an officially rejected site. When the bishop of Košice, Milan Chaultur, opened official investigations at Pri Brale, the opportunity to reestablish relations between the two sites arose. In 2011 I talked again to both Father Atanasii in Ukraine and Sister Agata, the Pri Brale visionary, in Slovakia. They both confirmed that they regard each other's apparition sites as based on genuine divine revelations, and would be pleased if they could overcome what they called a "human dimension" leading to troubles and quarrels.

The communication with the apparition site at Pri Brale was not the only support Dzhublyk received from Slovakia. Representatives of *Magnificat Slovakia*, an independent religious association that publishes *MRosa*, a magazine devoted largely to Marian apparitions worldwide,¹⁶ visited Dzhublyk on a number of occasions and published articles about it. They have also made films about Dzhublyk that are available for sale at the apparition site. Every year on the anniversary of the apparitions, busloads of pilgrims from Slovakia visit the site. Many of them learned about Dzhublyk from *MRosa*, whose journalists are also always present.

Other transnational connections are more difficult to follow, although there are indications that there are links between, for example, Dzhublyk and Ukrainian emigrant communities. I have heard of attempts to secure the support of emigrant communities in Europe and beyond, including the distribution of Dzhublyk-related artifacts (for example, bottled spring water) abroad. It is also an established fact that Iosip Terelya, a Ukrainian dissident and mystic persecuted during Soviet times and forced in 1988 to emigrate to Canada, visited Dzhublyk several times. He died in 2009 and apparently expressed a wish to be buried near the apparition site. Indeed, his body was transported from Canada and he was buried in a village cemetery in Nyzhnie Bolotne.

It certainly seems that there were attempts to broaden Dzhublyk's scope internationally, although so far with mixed success. For a few years, a Canadian priest of Ukrainian origin took up residence at Dzhublyk. He came to Dzhublyk with a group of friends from Ivano-Frankivsk and decided to stay there, helping

¹⁶ See <http://www.magnificat.sk/> (accessed September 19, 2013).

the place with his priestly services as well as with his financial resources. In conversations I conducted with him in 2008, he expressed a wish to stay at Dzhublyk until the end of his life. However, in 2011 he was no longer there. I was unable to determine the reasons for his departure.

Crisis Conditions

Like many authors before them, Bromley and Bobbitt (2011) point out that crisis conditions often trigger apparitional events and their subsequent development, and distinguish three levels of such crisis conditions: macro-social, micro-social, and personal. I have already discussed the personal level in the earlier section on the visionaries. Their distinction between macro- and micro-social conditions is not entirely clear. At the macro-level, they point to the development of modern secular societies and the resulting disputes that arise over, for example, questions of birth control and sexual orientation. However, from an anthropological point of view, people experience such broad issues not on the macro-social level, but rather on the micro-social level, to use Bromley and Bobbitt's terminology, that is, through locally grounded discourse and practice. In the case of Dzhublyk, particularly important is the post-socialist situation, in which values and practices that were self-evident during Soviet times are called into question by new developments in the country and increased communication possibilities with the outside world. The specific legal situation of churches as organizations in the Soviet Union, as well as modes of underground operation of the Greek Catholic Church, has strongly influenced the ways in which people perceive the relationship between a church understood as a global organization and a church understood as a local community of believers. The apparitions at Dzhublyk can be seen as an attempt to redefine the relations between clergy and laity within the organizational church, after the period of suppression of the Greek Catholic Church during Soviet times.

The second aspect of this post-socialist situation is a growing suspicion of the perceived secularization processes in Western countries, combined with a simultaneous appreciation of certain features of European democracy and capitalism. I do not agree with Perry and Echeverría (1988), who portray apparitional movements as anti-modern and traditionalist. As I have shown elsewhere, participation in transnational Marian apparitional networks may

lead in some cases to the development of cosmopolitan attitudes (Halemba 2011). Moreover, it is not entirely clear what type of religiosity Dzhublyk actually promotes. For many Dzhublyk devotees, the decision to participate in religious rituals at Dzhublyk, rather than in their own village parishes, reflects a preference for what is from their perspective a more individualized, reflective, and flexible form of worship. While such issues as the legalization of same-sex marriages and abortion, diminishing church attendance, and repeated accusations against the hierarchs of the Catholic Church are discussed at Dzhublyk as signs of moral collapse linked to liberal capitalism, Western countries are nevertheless seen as exemplars of freedom and democracy, which can and should be practiced in the religious, as well as in the secular sphere. Simultaneously, many aspects of life in late socialism are remembered in a positive light: the stability of jobs and income, accessibility of education and medical care, consistency in state administrative measures, and the general predictability of everyday life. What was disturbing in late socialism for Dzhublyk devotees was the regime's atheistic position (especially the ban on Greek Catholicism), restrictions on international contacts and travel, and the relative unavailability of certain material goods. The crisis condition in Bromley and Bobbitt's terms can be identified in this tension between the desirable and undesirable features of two political regimes—state socialism and liberal capitalism—between which people see themselves as located. There are advantages and disadvantages to both systems, but there is one negative feature that both systems are perceived to share: their disregard or hostility toward religion, which translates for people into the lack of a clear moral code. Dzhublyk can, therefore, be seen as an attempt to build a moral alternative to the two systems, which simultaneously attract and repel people.

Another crisis condition that can be identified in relation to Dzhublyk has to do with the position of Transcarpathia in the Ukrainian nation-building project, especially with regard to the so-called Rusyn (or Ruthenian) question concerning the identity of the Slavic-speaking populations of the Carpathian Mountains in Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania and, to a lesser extent, Hungary. There are ongoing, unresolved discussions concerning the legitimacy of Rusyn identification, particularly in Slavic-speaking countries, the scope and legitimacy of Rusyn political struggles, and their relations with other Slavic groups of the region, especially those that have managed to form sovereign nation-states. I refer to the so-called Rusyn question in the next chapter, but

only to the extent to which it is an aspect of internal politics within the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo and the development of Dzhublyk.¹⁷

Organizational Embracement, Organizational Rejection

The last important aspect of the situation at Dzhublyk that relates to general patterns of Marian apparitions is the question of organizational embracement, that is, the reaction of the Catholic Church. Bromley and Bobbitt (2011) noticed that despite the fact that the apparitions tend to occur in times of crisis, including internal crises in the Catholic Church, the movements related to them see themselves as an integral part of the Catholic tradition and usually do not seek a separation from the official Catholic Church. Regardless of the initial suspicions that church officials usually express, Marian apparitional movements provide an avenue to press for adjustment, rather than separation from the church. The followers of an apparition may feel disadvantaged or unrepresented within official church structures, but they usually do not seek to form a separate organization; at most they hope to reform the old one. In this process, the supporters of the apparition mobilize the Virgin Mary as the ultimate advocate for their cause.

In his interesting work on the development of the rules of adjudication for sainthood in the Catholic Church in post-Reformation Europe, Paolo Parigi (2010) shows how miracles, being the crucial component of this process, became gradually transformed and divided by the church into “true” and “false” ones. Only “true” miracles could then become the foundation for the gradual recognition of a given person as venerated, blessed, and, finally, a saint. In debate with some neo-institutional approaches, Parigi shows that the rules executed by an organization (in this case the Catholic Church faced with social movements supporting particular candidates for sainthood) do not have to be treated exclusively as tools for exerting power, but can also be seen as instruments for transforming institutions, that is, according to him, relations between actors following compatible goals. The goals of the church and of the social movements become integrated via what Parigi calls “reverse de-

¹⁷ There is a large body of literature on the Rusyn question in general, and new works in both English and the vernacular languages of the region appear on a regular basis. Even a brief, superficial treatment of the Rusyn question would be far beyond the scope of this work.

coupling,” that is, a process whereby rules are not used to replace or remove practices that do not comply with them, but are instead used to give those practices new meanings. In the case of the Catholic Church after the Reformation, the aim was both to acknowledge and incorporate fervent local faith that coalesced around miracles, but at the same time to develop across locales a consistent model of sainthood that could rechannel legitimacy to the church. The strategy of reverse decoupling resulted in developing rules for checking the veracity of miracles that were actually independent of the actions of the candidates who created the rules (Parigi 2010: 16). In 1642 a set of such rules was finally established and remained in place virtually unchanged until the twentieth century. Miracles that are judged “true” according to these rules had to have the same form: “a sort of exportable good, so to speak, disembedded from the local context that produced them” (Parigi 2010: 47). The gradual introduction of these rules from the second half of the sixteenth century resulted in the learning of successful patterns of miracle-making that could lead to church approval. Local supporters of particular candidates for sainthood could therefore censor “inappropriate” miracles, which resulted in reducing the numbers of miracles that were brought up for investigation and subsequently shortened the amount of time the canonization commissions had to work. According to Parigi, the results were advantageous to both parties—the rules both reduced social competition on the local level and channeled locally produced legitimacy into the religious organization. Paolo Parigi’s work shows that the introduction of strict rules does not have to be seen as a case of domination and exertion of power, but instead it can be seen as the development of an institution that creates an environment in which different parties can communicate, negotiate, and benefit. True, he does not really address in his work those cases where the church refused to recognize the miracles of a candidate as true and therefore closed for the candidate (at least temporarily) a path to organizationally recognized sainthood. He does note, however, that, even in such cases, the work of the church commission could be used by the candidate’s followers to mobilize local support. Therefore, it seems that the introduction of strict rules can actually generate opportunities as well as suppress them.

Apparitional events can in some respects be considered miracles. Still, there is an important point to be made here related to the development of modern apparitional patterns in Catholicism. Marian apparitions belong to the category of “private revelations,” that is, communications with God or its messengers

that happen after the so-called public revelation was completed. This public revelation is unchangeable and forms the basis of the doctrine and teachings of the church. Its basis is the Old and New Testaments,¹⁸ which have to be interpreted within the “sacred tradition” of which the organizational church is the guardian. However, according to the catechism of the Catholic Church, “Throughout the ages there have been so-called private revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church. They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith. It is not their role to improve or complete Christ’s definitive revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history.”¹⁹ As already noted above, private revelations were for a long time treated as part of the biography of a candidate to sainthood and therefore judged as a part of his or her life (Blackbourn 1993). The apparitions did not stand out as events in their own right; rather, they were part of the process of the creation of sainthood, as described by Paolo Parigi and summarized above. During the Council of Trent (1545–1663), in the same period when the rules of adjudication of sainthood were established, the first guidelines for the church’s assessment of apparitions were also formalized, with the local bishop being designated as the main authority in the investigation of apparitional cases (Foley 2002). The judgment of apparitions and the judgment of miracles as signs of sainthood were probably seen at that time as a part of the same process. Bringing the adjudication of apparitions to the level of the local bishopric (prior to that, the Vatican reserved for itself control over the judgment of apparitions) was part of the same strategy of “reverse decoupling” that Parigi describes. The church, faced with the uncertainties of the post-Reformation period, tried to mobilize and rechannel local religious fervor rather than simply control or restrict it.

However, in the nineteenth century something very important happened with regard to apparitions that is, related to the process of the establishment of modern apparitional patterns. At that time, private revelations stopped being just a part of the biography of future saints and became events with their own histories and trajectories, where the personages of visionaries were still an important element, but not the main focus of attention. Rather, the apparitional events themselves started to occupy center stage—the biography

¹⁸ *Dei Verbum*: 4. See: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html. (accessed March 23, 2015).

¹⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 67. See: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s1c2a1.htm (accessed March 23, 2015).

of the visionary became a part of the creation of the apparitional site, and not the other way around. The site of apparitions, the messages, and the experiences of pilgrims became as important, and gradually even more important than the visionary and his or her biography. It can be said that the sacred place became the principal magnet for pilgrims. Visionaries ceased to be predominantly members of the clergy, and apparitions were seen as just one element of their ordinary lives, and not as miracles, the main function of which was to demonstrate the personal charisma of a candidate for sainthood. Moreover, in the nineteenth century the Virgin Mary was reported to talk more during apparitions, delivering series of messages concerning various aspects of religious and political life. She became a speaker for particular causes, sometimes explicitly calling people to undertake actions with political significance, as at Fatima when she clearly opposed communism. Importantly, starting in the nineteenth century, Marian apparitions stopped being private events in the sense of a lone visionary in his or her own room or in a chapel talking to the Virgin Mary and then telling his or her confessor about it. They became public events: after the news of an initial event had spread, hundreds of pilgrims would gather at the apparition site to observe the visionary communicating with the Virgin Mary.

This all happened at a time that was difficult for the church in terms of securing its place in the public arena in the face of secularism as a pervasive state ideology in Western Europe. Apparitions had, however, an ambivalent position within the church as an organization. On the one hand, they mobilized religious Catholics; on the other hand, they were used by secularists to expose religious credulity and ignorance (Bennett 2012; Harris 2000). Interestingly, the caution and ambivalence of the church toward apparitions was expressed in the relative lack of rules concerning the judgment of the apparitions. During the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, there were no clear rules according to which apparitions could be judged as events independent from the eventual canonization process of the visionary. The local bishop was responsible for establishing an investigative commission. But there were no clear rules concerning this work, especially not ones accessible to laity or even lower-level clergy. In Parigi's terms, therefore, there was not a clearly established institution that would allow for the renegotiation of the apparitional events between the involved parties. Probably, the church did not want to establish a path through which reverse decoupling, or the adaptation of apparitional performance on a local level with the hope of organizational embracement,

could take place. Although there might have been some internal regulations known to the bishops, these were not made public.

Even in 1978, when the “Norms of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the Manner of Proceedings for Judging Alleged Apparitions and Revelations” were accepted by Pope Paul VI, the document was first published *in secreto*.²⁰ It was meant as an internal guideline for bishops, not intended for public distribution; nevertheless, it circulated and has been quoted by researchers and followers of Marian apparitions at least since the appearance of the Internet (Foley 2002). When I asked in the library of the Ukrainian Catholic University in L’viv in 2008 about literature that could help me understand the Catholic Church’s procedures concerning the judgment of apparitions, I was told with a smirk that such procedures could not be made public because the number of apparitional cases structured according to them would rapidly increase. However, recently the Vatican made the “Norms” available on its website, stating that “over the years this document has been published in various works treating these matters, in more than one language, without obtaining the prior permission of this Dicastery. Today, it must be recognized that the contents of these important norms are already in the public domain. Therefore, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith believes it is now opportune to publish these *Norms*, providing translations in the principle languages.”²¹

This brief document starts with acknowledgement that the role of these rules is to make sure that “the devotion stirred among the faithful as a result of facts of this sort might manifest itself in full communion with the Church, and bear fruits by which the Church herself might later discern the true nature of the facts.” Ostensibly, then, the ultimate task remains to establish the veracity of the apparitions, but the role of the rules themselves is conceptualized differently. They are to establish the grounds on which the investigation into the nature of a given apparition—that is, to establish if it is *constat de supernaturalitate*, *non constat de supernaturalitate*, or *constat de non supernaturalitate* (declared of supernatural origin, not declared of supernatural origin, or declared of non-supernatural origin)—can be conducted without hurry. The main responsibility remains with the local bishop, who should carry out a diligent investigation.

²⁰ See www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20111214_prefazione-levada_en.html (accessed March 23, 2015).

²¹ See www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20111214_prefazione-levada_en.html (accessed March 23, 2015).

He can establish a special commission, or judge the situation himself. It seems that establishing a special commission is seen as the first important step, leading potentially to organizational embracement of a given site. As we have seen with the example of Pri Brale in Slovakia, the local bishop refused to establish an investigative commission for the first eight years after the initial apparitional event. The establishment of such a commission in 2010 was locally interpreted as a definitive indication of the improvement in relations between church authorities and the people advocating for the apparition site.

Church authorities have to investigate the apparition site according to so-called negative and positive criteria. First, the authorities have to check if the events really took place as narrated; second, the moral qualities of the visionaries come under scrutiny, as well as their “sincerity and habitual docility toward Ecclesiastical Authority”; third, the “doctrinal orthodoxy” of the apparitions has to be proven, in other words, it must be shown that the visionaries do not report anything that contradicts the official doctrine; finally, the church commission looks at the devotions developing at the apparition site—how people pray, if there are many conversions, if people take the sacraments, in short, if their devotions bring “abundant and constant spiritual fruit.” The criteria of negative character include doctrinal errors; errors concerning the facts; gravely immoral acts associated with the event; and greed (excessive seeking of material gains). Father Frederik M. Jelly writes that “the function of the investigative committee is to ascertain whether the phenomenon is truly beyond human explanation” (Jelly 1993: 50). However, even this brief presentation of the positive and negative criteria indicates that the question of truth does not stand at the center of the commission’s attention. Rather, the concern is to establish that the practices at the newly emerging religious site develop in ways that do not undermine the position of the church as an organization. Although the local bishop is the first personage to organizing the investigation and decision making, the Vatican Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith has the right to conduct its own investigation, independent from the local bishop. It has happened in the history of apparitions that a given site received approval from a local bishop, but was then rejected by the Vatican’s commission, as in the case of visionary Ida Peerdeman in Amsterdam (Margry 2009); it is also possible that a local bishop will firmly reject a site, but the Vatican’s commission can continue working on its own evaluation of the apparition, as in the case of Medjugorje.

Juan Louis Bastero (2011) writes that among Catholic theologians there has been for some time a strong prejudice against apparitions for at least two reasons. First, the sheer number of apparitions that were reported in the twentieth century made theologians suspicious and extremely cautious about new claims. Second, and more importantly, there is a strong rationalist and scientific camp within the church whose members would like to remove all extraordinary events from the life of the church (Bastero 2011: 349–350). Moreover, if we follow Parigi's interpretation, the relative lack of rules of adjudication of the apparitional events until fairly recently could actually indicate that the church treated the apparitions as events that can straightforwardly challenge clerical control. For Bromley and Bobbitt, the tension between an apparitional movement's allies and its opponents is located between the Catholic Church's attempts to exert control and the movement's goals and ambitions. The result of this tension can be acquiescence on the part of the movement, which implies enhanced organizational control, or resistance, which implies increased organizational rejection (2011: 7). However, when we look at available lists of Marian apparitions worldwide, of which there have apparently been hundreds in the last two centuries (Hierzenberger and Nedomansky 2005),²² the practice of the Catholic Church seems to be different. The most common strategy is not a choice between acceptance and rejection, but endurance and maintenance of the status quo. The "under consideration" or "no decision" apparitional sites are definitely the most common. In this context and taking into account Parigi's argument on reverse decoupling, the recent publication of the "Norms" can be seen as the church's way of opening the door to negotiations with social movements focused around apparitional events. The "Norms" are out in public not because the church wants to exert more power over the development of apparitional movements, but because it wants to establish an institution within its organizational framework that facilitates negotiations with apparitional movements and that is accessible to them. Still, the strategy of waiting and observing is also firmly in place—the church is quick neither to accept nor to reject apparitions; rather, as Bastero (2011: 361) writes, "It is often advisable to let time pass and see how matters develop. In many instances the silence of Church authorities resulted in dampening the initial enthusiasm of the faithful and converting it into indifference and silence."

²² There are also good sources available on the internet: <http://www.miraclehunter.com/> and <http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/resources/aprtable.html> (accessed March 23, 2015).

The complex nature of church negotiations with apparitional movements is indicated, however, by the fact that those rules, on the one hand, open a field of negotiations, but on the other hand, they contain built-in mechanisms that can be activated to diminish the importance of apparitions *in toto*. First, the apparition can be judged authentic, only if it does not make any changes to the doctrine of the church. Second, and more importantly, the special status of private revelations, as described above, makes them practically inconsequential for the identity of followers as Catholics. Even if a given apparition is judged by the church to be of supernatural origin and the church decides to put its official imprimatur on devotions at the apparition site, there is no relationship between a person's belief in such apparitions and his or her Christian self. "When the Church approves private revelations, she declares only that there is nothing in them contrary to faith or good morals, and that they may be read without danger or even with profit; no obligation is thereby imposed on the faithful to believe them."²³

This has actually been deeply puzzling for many of my lay interlocutors, who wonder why they are told by their parish priests that the apparition actually does not matter when, for them, it does. As research on apparitions to date and my own research suggest, the apparitions are acclaimed by many believers as deeply transformative events (Humphrey 2008). For many pilgrims who come to apparition sites, the truth of the apparitions is of concern and, moreover, they see their own acclamation of an apparition as a complete reconfiguration of who they are and how they relate to other people, objects, and spiritual powers. On the other hand, my research shows that determining the veracity of apparitions is quite low on the list of church officials' priorities. Contrary to the assumption underlying many previous works concerning Marian apparitions, church officials are not interested in establishing whether the Virgin Mary appeared or not. Even those bishops who were positively disposed toward the apparitions at Dzhiblyk for a variety of reasons expressed in conversations with me that the veracity of the apparition is not of crucial importance. What is of importance are the fruits of the apparitions. Father Frederik Jelly explicitly states that there is no straightforward relationship between the veracity of apparitions and their beneficial outcomes, "It should

²³ Poulain, Augustin. 1912. "Private Revelations." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Available at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13005a.htm> (accessed March 23, 2015).

be noted that the apparition need not to be judged authentic in order to deepen the faith and devotion of individuals” (1993: 50).

The way in which the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo dealt with the apparition site in Dzhublyk can be viewed as a gradual shift in approach from employing organizational power to restrict a social movement toward attempts at using official rules to construct a field of negotiations. In the next chapter I explore some of the most apparent reasons that may have led to the openly antagonistic relationship between the head of the eparchy at the time of the first apparitions in 2002, Bishop Ivan (Ioan) Semedii, and the managers of the site. Bishop Semedii issued decrees forbidding the erection of any structures at the site and entrusted the care of the pilgrims to a local parish priest from Vil'khivka who was not involved in the initial apparitional events. The bishop also asked the superiors of the Basilian order to which Father Atanasii belonged to help with his removal from Dzhublyk. In a letter dated September 30, 2002, the Rome-based protoarchimandrite of the Basilians, Dionisii Liakhovych, asked Father Atanasii to refrain from any involvement in Dzhublyk because “our religious order, with its long-term conjoint experience, is convinced that one cannot get involved in cases of ‘miraculous apparitions’ without causing unnecessary complications.”²⁴ On October 29, 2002, Bishop Semedii issued the following letter:

On the basis of the letter of September 30, 2002 from Protoarchimandrite OSBM Dionisii Liakhovych and consultations with the Apostolic Nuncio for Ukraine, Archbishop Nikola Eterović, in L'viv on October 25, 2002, I personally forbid Father Atanasii Tsyipesh OSBM, as well as all priests of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy and other priests, to conduct any liturgies, to preach, to invite people for pilgrimage, and even more so to build any chapels, churches, or monasteries on the site of the “miraculous apparitions of the Holy Virgin in Vil'khivka next to Dzhublyk.” This prohibition does not concern the believers. They, if they wish, can pray “next to Dzhublyk.”²⁵

Phrased as a prohibition with regard to the clergy, this formulation actually retained the possibility of developing and institutionalizing Dzhublyk through activities of the laity. Bishop Semedii for all practical purposes condoned lay

²⁴ *Blahovisnykk* 11 (2002): 4.

²⁵ Letter № 375, published in *Blahovisnyk* 11 (2002): 4.

worship at the site, although he did not intend to create any institutional environment that would allow for negotiations between the organizational church and any social movements that formed around the apparition site. This is especially interesting if we compare the situation at Dzhublyk with the one at Pri Brale in Slovakia. There, the prohibition against visiting the apparition site was extended to lay believers. In an earlier article, I argued that this difference in bishops' attitudes toward the respective apparition sites may well be related to the different position of the church vis-à-vis the state in the two countries, with the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia being relatively independent in terms of management and financing from contributions of lay believers, while in Ukraine the church is very much dependent on them (Halemba 2007, 2008c,e; *see also* Chapter 4). In both cases, the local bishops were explicitly opposed to the apparitions. But in the case of Ukraine, where the position of laity is very strong, a direct rejection on all fronts would have been difficult to implement.

Chapter 5 explores in detail the change in eparchial policies toward Dzhublyk that occurred after the retirement of Bishop Semedii in January 2003 and the appointment of Bishop Milan Šašik as the head of the eparchy. Since Bishop Šašik's appointment, various church regulations have been used to negotiate with Dzhublyk's managers in order to optimize the outcomes for the church. I heard many times from my clerical interlocutors that Bishop Šašik decided to prevent what they called a "sectarian split" by making the unity and integrity of the church the main goal of negotiations. My analysis of the writings of Bishop Semedii, conversations with Bishop Šašik and other eparchial authorities, and discussions with many priests concerning both bishops' attitudes towards Dzhublyk all left me with the impression that their actions were not directed toward establishing whether the Virgin Mary or other holy figures really spoke with the girls, but toward managing the site in ways that would be, in their judgment, beneficial or at least not harmful to the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy, and especially its organizational unity. Bishop Šašik chose a strategy of negotiation, establishing a commission that was to investigate the apparitions and lifting the strict ban on visiting the site by clergy. The commission investigated the psychological health of the visionaries and regularly visited Dzhublyk, especially in the initial years. Over time, the visits became less frequent and happened only when some new important claim concerning a miraculous occurrence took place. In Chapter 5 I describe the events of May 2003, which can be interpreted as the final (and

shattered) attempt on the part of eparchial authorities to fully control Dzhublyk, an attempt that, as supporters of the site and, especially Father Atanasii feared, could have led to its gradual liquidation. After those events, the Dzhublyk site became the focus of careful negotiations. In 2011, as I had heard that the church commission no longer conducted investigations, I decided to inquire into the matter at the eparchial headquarters. The public relations officer at the eparchy said that the commission was still working, slowly and behind closed doors. Unofficially, however, one of the members of the commission whom I had known from my previous visits, told me that the commission did not have anything to work on; he implied that everything was clear regarding Dzhublyk (in his opinion it was a hoax), and said that the commission's task was not to "investigate" but to "negotiate."

After the events of May 2003, the site, although still highly controversial, gradually started to gain legitimacy, a process that was helped by the physical presence of Bishop Šašik. In July 2004 he gave his temporary permission to establish an episcopal monastic order at Dzhublyk to which monks and nuns could be accepted. Father Atanasii, following, as he says, advice of the Virgin Mary, abandoned the Basilian order and became the head of the newly established eparchial monastic order at Dzhublyk. Bishop Šašik started to visit the site regularly on important religious occasions (Easter, Christmas, the anniversary of the apparitions), conducting pontifical liturgies and blessing newly erected religious structures there. This does not mean that the bishop accepts everything that happens at Dzhublyk, and even less so that he accepts the apparitions as authentic. On the contrary, at the eparchial headquarters the critical voices against Dzhublyk definitely overwhelm the supporting ones. Still, it is recognized that Dzhublyk has strong local backing and is situated within complex networks of support that go beyond eparchial boundaries. Moreover, church authorities appreciate the fact that Dzhublyk has become a place where many lay believers reinforce their faith and their attachment to the Catholic Church.

Dzhublyk is not the only site of apparitions of the Virgin Mary in present-day Ukraine. There are other such sites and other religious movements that have had to be addressed by the official Greek Catholic Church hierarchy in recent years. Virtually all of them are at the moment declared heretical and/or sectarian by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, on whose territory they appeared. The movements' leaders openly reject the UGCC's judgments, claiming that, for various reasons, it does not have legitimacy. Dzhublyk is

therefore an exception because in the ten years of its existence it has managed not only to stay within the boundaries of the official Greek Catholic Church, but even to strengthen its position. This is despite the fact that Dzhublyk actually shares some important characteristics with those rejected sites and movements, including being openly critical of the present conditions and teachings of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine. Dzhublyk stands out because it is the only site that has been managed in a way that has allowed for a gradual, cautious, but nevertheless continual organizational accommodation of the new pilgrimage site. Most of the other contemporary apparition sites and movements critical of the church were relegated to the status of sect. Examples here include the apparition of the Virgin Mary in Lishnia near Drohobych, the apparitions of the Virgin Mary at Spivuche Pole in Ternopil', and a non-apparitional movement of former Basilian monks who call themselves the Ukrainian (Truly) Orthodox²⁶ Greek Catholic Church (UPGKC), and who are referred to in the media and by their opponents as "Dohnalovtsy" (from the name of the movement's leader, Antonin Dohnal). I have visited Lishnia twice and conducted interviews with the visionary's mother, who manages the site at present, and with some of the supporters. I know the UPGKC from their publications, Internet presence,²⁷ and the controversy they caused in Transcarpathia when they started delivering leaflets explaining their position and goals to all Greek Catholic priests. Despite crucial differences in the forms the movements take, there are several features that link them and that also have been present to an extent at Dzhublyk at various stages in the development of the site. These include, most importantly, the fervent glorification of the underground Greek Catholic Church and absolute rejection of any attempts at the re-Byzantization of the church (e.g., attempts to free the Eastern liturgies from Latin influences). Moreover, there are strict rules concerning the behavior of followers (strict dress code, liturgies of five and more hours, prolonged kneeling). In these respects, Dzhublyk is definitely less demanding on its followers than the other sites. Dzhublyk is also more

²⁶ They use the term *pravovirnyi* instead of *pravoslavnyi* in their name in Ukrainian: *Ukrainska Pravovirna Hreko Katolicka Cerkva*. Those terms both are best translated into English as Orthodox. However, the representatives of the UPGKC use the term *pravovirnyi* because *pravoslavnyi* is used in Ukrainian (and Russian) to refer to the Orthodox Church, with which they do not want to be associated.

²⁷ <http://uogcc.org.ua/>, <http://www.community.org.ua/>, <http://video.community.org.ua/ua/index.php> (accessed September 19, 2013).

accommodating in terms of ecumenical (but not interreligious) dialogue than the other sites. The most problematic feature of these other movements is the vehement rejection of contemporary Greek Catholic Church authorities. This tendency has also been present at Dzhublyk and surfaces from time to time, but never reaches the level of Lishnia and the UPGKC. In Lishnia, priestly authority is rejected on many different levels. First of all, there is the rejection of official church authorities as expressed in the charge that they lack charismatic authority—the visionary said that the Holy Spirit had abandoned the existing church buildings and manifests itself only at the so-called holy places, which are usually marked by the apparitions. Secondly, all sacraments, including the sacrament of the altar and confession, can be executed by lay believers. The UPGKC established its own hierarchy and excommunicated the existing church hierarchy of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

Dzhublyk, despite controversies that have beset the site from the very beginning, has so far been managed in a way that has allowed it to stay within the framework of the organizational church. Many priests with whom I talked admit that at the very beginning, when the former head of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Church adopted a firm negative stance against Dzhublyk, the possibility of a split was real. Since then supporters, managers, and opponents of Dzhublyk and the hierarchy of the Greek Catholic Church have engaged in an intricate dance of negotiations. It seems that, ten years after the initial apparition, Dzhublyk is slowly starting to occupy a stable place within the religious landscape of Transcarpathia. In a complex process of compromises, mutual accusations, and threats alternating with friendly overtures, the negotiations over the future of Dzhublyk have continued from 2002 to the present day. It is a puzzling situation when I go to Dzhublyk and see the bishop or some other high official celebrating the liturgy at this rapidly growing pilgrimage site, and then, back in Uzhhorod, when I ask them about Dzhublyk I am answered either with silence or, in moments of candor, with shaking heads and deep sighs: “Ah, well, what can one do? It is there!” It is quite significant that, while the covers of the first booklets published by the site managers featured the Virgin Mary as the main figure, more recent booklets present a photograph of the site itself. The Virgin Mary has actually ceased to be the main figure anymore, perhaps because, within the framework offered by the Catholic Church, one cannot really argue in meaningful terms about her presence or absence—it is inconsequential. What is consequential is the material presence of Dzhublyk, which becomes a kind of materialized and

fixed event with transformative power. It is the material presence of Dzhublyk as a shaped pilgrimage site, and not the presence or absence of the Virgin Mary, that is consequential for all involved parties.

Concluding Remarks

Robert Orsi (2008) equates apparitional events to the experiences of the visionaries. He writes, for example, that everything that happened at Lourdes happened because there was a meeting between a visionary and the lady in white:

Before the apparition at Lourdes became the subject of local controversy, before politicians, clergy, and scientists had staked out their positions, and before historians came along to remind us that similar events had occurred in the region before, that there was a local folkloric tradition of little people to which the woman in white belongs; before the trains started running on improved nationalized railroad tracks; before the souvenir shops opened; and before the water was shipped out in little bottles all over the world, there was the event of the face-to-face meeting of Bernadette and the woman in white who came to be identified as the Immaculate Conception. Before everything else there was the event of the presence of the human and the divine to each other. (Orsi 2008: 14)

This is a problematic approach. First, there is no causal linkage between the experience of the visionaries and what happens at the site. As William Christian convincingly shows, only a fraction of such visions ever becomes public, and there are probably thousands of visions that are experienced only by the seer himself or herself (Christian 2009). Second, experience is regarded as the basis for the development of “special paths”—institutionalization and organizational embracement—but it does not follow that we can take the given individual experience, a personal face-to-face meeting with the transcendent, for granted. Reading social scientific studies of the apparitions of the Virgin Mary to date, one has the impression that it is assumed that at the root of the apparitional events and development of a pilgrimage site lies the experience of a visionary or visionaries. This experience is subsequently interpreted as a vision of the Virgin Mary or other holy figure through a process of negotiation over the

narratives on apparitional events. The main question is that of the transformation of such a personal experience from a private revelation to a public phenomenon in those few cases where such a transformation occurs.

Still, such an approach assumes the primacy of the initial visionary experience. I understand the ethical grounds on which such a research approach is based—any other approach could appear to be challenging or undermining the authenticity of experience, which is obviously a daredevil task. Still, focusing on the visions or other multisensory experiences as the starting point is, in my opinion, not the most fruitful approach with regard to Dzhublyk and perhaps to many other apparition sites as well. This is not primarily because of considerable doubts regarding the initial apparitional events. Rather, the history of Dzhublyk shows that apparitional events and apparitional sites can develop extremely successfully without the visionaries, although to say so does not mean that they develop without the presence of an “experience deemed religious.” This is the experience of communication with the transcendental power, which gives legitimacy to the site, but this experience does not necessarily have to be equated with the experience of the visionaries. I have no reason to doubt that both young seers are convinced that they have been conversing with the Virgin Mary. I also do not doubt the experiences of the pilgrims or the sincerity of the dedication to the site of the members of the Dzhublyk support organizations. Still, the sincerity of those experiences has little to do with the initial visionary experience of the two girls in 2002. Dzhublyk continues to grow and expand despite the fact that it has been riven by controversy from the very beginning. It elicits strong emotions and heated discussions. By some it is ignored, while by others it is considered to be the highest grace. It is by far not the only apparition site in western Ukraine, but it has one important dimension that differentiates it from most of the others: it operates within the framework of the contemporary Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine, and it has not thus far been rejected or dismissed as a sect, although my interviews show that the closer a given church official is to the eparchial center, the more likely he is to have substantial doubts concerning the apparitions or even the outright conviction either that the apparition is a hoax or that the place has lost its grace because of developments that have taken place in and around it in subsequent years. The power of Dzhublyk stems not directly and straightforwardly from the fact that the Virgin Mary appeared there in 2002, but from human involvement with the site and its symbolic world.

Nation and Church in Transcarpathia

Transcarpathia was never Ukraine. We were always Austro-Hungary, Poland, Hungary....During [World War II], during the revolution, we were left in peace, thank God, we just enjoyed normality. If all Ukraine was as Transcarpathia is now and the question of the European Union was being considered, they would have accepted us, because our way of life is the same as in Europe. But you should travel further into Ukraine! There, they are all bandits. They have nothing but poverty. You can buy two or three villages there for a thousand dollars, inhabitants included, and the people would not even notice. And here, this is Transcarpathia. This is a separate state. Transcarpathians have always been at work: when it was part of the USSR, Transcarpathia built Siberia, Russia. Today in Canada, in the United States, our people are at work there. And they [Ukrainians from the rest of Ukraine] are not there, because they cannot live there. This is because our people are not nationalistic. We do love our state. But we do not care what state it is. Thank God we have the border! And they [Ukrainians from the rest of Ukraine] do not like us precisely because we have so many borders. We can earn money and live well thanks to that, and everyone here tries to live well. And they cannot do anything; they are only able to plant potatoes. Everything else—tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers—all those have to be brought to them from Transcarpathia.

This is an excerpt from a 2011 interview I conducted with a Transcarpathian priest. Such views were seldom expressed by my other interlocutors in such a harsh and open manner; still, one could easily read similar opinions between the lines. It is as if the issue of the relationship between Transcarpathia, its inhabitants, the Ukrainian state, and the Ukrainian nation formed an undercurrent that is not often made explicit in everyday life. However, if one dips

below the surface, the current manifests itself not as a silent rivulet, but as a powerful and angry cascade.

The person “dipping below the surface” does not have to be a trained anthropologist. These issues are discussed in the local press and are also prominent in the realm of religious life, as I show below with, for example, the discussion of liturgical language. Admittedly, most of the people in Transcarpathia do not want such issues to influence relations among people living in Transcarpathia, and open outbursts of disagreement are relatively rare. After all, as the priest quoted above stressed, the inhabitants of Transcarpathia “just want to live well,” and being at peace with one’s neighbors is a part of that strategy. As he also said, “We are just not able to walk around with all those national flags and slogans; that is just not our thing.”

It seems that there are several reasons why the issues of national identity are not discussed that often in everyday situations in Transcarpathia, despite their periodic recurrence in the media. First of all, people know that those are burning issues and do not want to cause unrest by giving them exposure. Second, when people do bring these issues into the public discussion, there is a high probability that they will be accused of aggressive nationalism (if they support the Ukrainian option) or of treachery to the state (if they in any way underline the distinctiveness of Transcarpathia). There is, therefore, a certain fear related to discussing issues of national identity. However, the historical, social, and political relations between Transcarpathia and the rest of Ukraine form a set of particularly important questions that shape the processes of identity formation in this part of the Ukrainian state.

This chapter contains a good deal of historical information on relations between Transcarpathia, Ukraine and the neighboring states as well as relations between the Greek Catholic Church structures in Transcarpathia and the rest of the country. In my opinion, it is not possible to comprehend the significance and development of the Dzhublyk apparition site without this background knowledge, especially since references to historical events occur frequently within the discussions around the apparition site. This chapter concentrates on the meaning of the Virgin Mary’s calls for unity as a special message for Ukraine, Transcarpathia, and the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy, in particular. The understanding of Dzhublyk as a commentary on the contemporary identity of Transcarpathians vis-à-vis the Ukrainian national project is not based exclusively on my interpretation of the events I observed

at the site, but also on explicit declarations of some of my interlocutors. While this extremely delicate issue is rarely discussed openly, I did in fact meet people who described Dzhublyk as a “Ukrainian nationalist affair.” Although I do not necessarily share their clearly negative stance, my own observations corroborate the view that Dzhublyk has been, at least for some time, a significant and recurring motif in a long-standing discussion of the relations between Transcarpathia, its Slavic-speaking population, and the Ukrainian state.

First, I present the position of Transcarpathia in today’s Ukraine, paying particular attention to the question of national identification; second, I outline the history of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy (MGCE) in relation to the Vatican and to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC); and third, I present the current debate within the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia on national identity, with an emphasis on the lives and work of two school friends who became important figures and later went their separate ways as church officials: Bishop Ivan Marhitych and Bishop Ivan Semedii. I conclude the chapter with an analysis of certain crucial events and symbols at Dzhublyk and their interpretation with regard to contemporary identity politics in the MGCE.

I devote a substantial part of this book on negotiations in the sphere of religious life to the question of the place of Transcarpathia within the Ukrainian national project, as this issue is addressed both implicitly and explicitly at the Dzhublyk apparition site. This is not a surprise, as many Marian apparitions have played a role in struggles over national identity (Bennett 2012; Skrbíš 2005). As Paolo Apolito writes in his brief characterization of Catholic visionary culture, the apparition is often “used as a new resource in the struggle to redefine the structure of local power, whether to change the internal dynamics of leadership, to co-opt new social subjects into it, or to defend against external or extralocal attack” (Apolito 1998: 33–34). From the very first day of my stay in Transcarpathia, I was caught up in discussions on national identity, and was either encouraged to visit Dzhublyk or discouraged from doing so, depending on my interlocutor’s attitude toward the question of the national identity of Transcarpathia’s inhabitants. There have been many clear-cut incidents at Dzhublyk that allow for an interpretation of its role in the ongoing debates about the identities and loyalties of Transcarpathia’s inhabitants with regard to Ukrainian state and nation. During one of the very first apparitions, the Virgin

Mary clarified the purpose of her visits, saying that she had come to help reinstitute the authority of priests among the people, to unite the church, and to unite the divided people. This chapter explores one of the interpretations of the kind of unity she probably had in mind—national unity.

One of the most important features making the apparitions of the Virgin Mary so powerful throughout the world is the fact that her presence—in holy images, sanctuaries, or through apparitions—can be interpreted simultaneously as support for particular, often national causes, as well as for more general, universal calls for love, peace, and redemption that do not have to be connected to any particular political agenda (Halemba 2011). For example, in Medjugorje, one of the best-known contemporary apparition sites, the Virgin Mary's presence is simultaneously interpreted as support for Croatian nationalism (Bax 1995; Skrbiš 2005) and as a call for peace and love of one's neighbors (Jurkovich and Gesler 1997). At apparition sites the world over, the Virgin Mary's presence and words are interpreted differently depending on the social and temporal contexts, and this is very much the case for the Virgin Mary of Dzhublyk. Moreover, this multivocality evoked by the presence of the Virgin Mary lies at the root of her success as God's messenger throughout the Catholic world. The Virgin Mary's presence can be seen as a very complex but also powerful tool of negotiation and management, used for the successful dissemination, patronage, and support of contentious, complex, and often contradictory ideologies and causes. Her presence allows even the most contested claims to be eclipsed by messages of universal resonance, and links them in such a way that the rejection of some claims can be interpreted as the rejection of universal love and goodness, as the Virgin Mary stands for this as well. The "contentious cause" that seems to be supported by this particular apparition of the Virgin Mary is the national unity of Ukrainians and the integrity of the Ukrainian state.

Transcarpathia in Today's Ukraine and the Rusyn Question

Moia khata s kraiu; ya nichego ne znaiu ["My house stands at the edge, so I know nothing"]. Do you know that Russian saying? Why do we need politics? It is all stupid and dirty....Why should we fight for a nation? One could fight for a good life, but should one fight for a nation?

—From a conversation with a parish priest in Transcarpathia, July 2011

If you do not love your people, if you do not love Ukraine, you are not a human being.

—*From a conversation with another parish priest in Transcarpathia, July 2011*

Zakarpats'ka Oblast' (Transcarpathian Region) is the official name in Ukrainian of an administrative unit within the Ukrainian state. The geographical–historic region that roughly corresponds to the territory of this unit is called *Zakarpattia*. Still, there are other names used for this region, for example *Karpats'ka Ukraina*, *Pidkarpats'ka Rus'*, and *Pidkarpattia*. This last designation can lead to confusion because it can refer to a region next to either the northern or the southern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains, depending on the point of view of the speaker and the context. In general, all the names used in reference to this region have strong political connotations.

In English the most common name for this region is Transcarpathia, the land *beyond* or *on the other side of* the Carpathian Mountains, which is a loose translation of *Zakarpattia* (literally, *behind* the Carpathian Mountains). If you look toward Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, or other Transcarpathian towns from L'viv or Kyiv, you are clearly looking beyond, or to the other side, of the Carpathian Mountains. The other common English name for the region, Subcarpathia, is the literal translation of *Pidkarpattia* and is most often used in publications by Hungarian authors or authors writing about the Hungarian minority in Ukraine (e.g., Pusztai and Pilipkó 2008). From this perspective, it is a land on the same side of the Carpathian Mountains as Budapest, Vienna, and Prague, the land *under* or at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains. These two designations represent the two most important interpretations of this region's place in contemporary European history: it is either an integral part of Ukraine whose inhabitants struggled for centuries for national and state independence (Vegesh et al. 2009), or it is a part of multinational Central Europe (Dobaev and Chernous 2010; Pop and Pop 2005; Pop and Voloshyn 2010). In this study, I use the terms Transcarpathia and the Transcarpathian Region to refer to the present-day administrative unit of the Ukrainian state that is the focus of this book, and not to the much larger region that is now divided by the national borders of Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. When, in my analysis and ethnographic descriptions, I make mention of the neighboring regions of Slovakia or Hungary, I use the present-day administrative designations of those regions. I have chosen to do this not because I personally subscribe to one or the other of these political interpretations, but because “Transcarpathian

Region” is the more widely accepted translation of the official name of the administrative unit within Ukraine. It is not my aim to add my voice to the often heated debates over the boundaries of Transcarpathia, Subcarpathia, or Carpathian Ruthenia. My aim is to understand why the identity of the inhabitants of the region is contested to such an extent that a supernatural figure has been called upon to take part in the discussions.

The present-day Transcarpathian Region is located in southwestern Ukraine; it borders Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania, and is home to many national minorities: Hungarians, Romanians, Roma, Slovaks, and others. Within Ukraine, it borders the Ivano-Frankivsk and L'viv regions, which are commonly considered to be among the strongholds of Ukrainian national identity.²⁸ In the 2004 presidential elections, Viktor Yushchenko received more than 90 percent of the votes there, while he received only 67 percent in Transcarpathia.²⁹ As Kimitaka Matsuzato (2002: 1273) writes in his analysis of the workings of the Transcarpathian party system, “Just across the mountains from L'viv *oblast* there is a very different political culture.” Like many other researchers, as well as Transcarpathian inhabitants, Matsuzato stresses the multinational character of Transcarpathia and the spirit of mutual tolerance that is often sharply contrasted with the more one-nation-focused atmosphere of Galicia that is the region of western Ukraine immediately north of Transcarpathia. Such a vision of Transcarpathia as a land of peaceful coexistence of nations, coupled with the relatively low level of overt Ukrainian nationalism, also has a much longer history. Keith Darden (2008), for one, compares the differences in the strength of support for the Ukrainian Insurgent Army during World War II in the Transcarpathian and Ivano-Frankivsk (former Stanislaviv) regions, interpreting them in terms of the different national policies in the two parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to which the two regions belonged—Transcarpathia to Hungary and Ivano-Frankivsk to Austria. In Hungary, the focus of nationality policies was on the assimilation (Magyarization) of the elites, including the elites of the Greek Catholic Church, while most of the population remained unschooled (Darden 2008: 16; Molnar 2008). In Galicia, the focus was on management through differentiation—the Austrian government supported Ukrainian national

²⁸ This part of the book was written well before the events of Maidan and the conflict in eastern Ukraine, which influenced greatly the attitudes of Transcarpathians as well as Galicians. Their analysis will be a subject of my following publications.

²⁹ In the decisive second round (see www.skrobach.com/ukrel04sa.htm). (accessed September 23, 2013).

identity as a counterbalance to Polish and later also to Russian influences. "In sum, the notion of an ancient and distinct Ukrainian nation, with its own racial, linguistic and historical heritage, was brought together in a new constitutive story in the late nineteenth century in Galicia, and therefore only in Stanislaviv and not Transcarpathia" (19). However, as Taras Kuzio writes in his review of studies concerning the Rusyn question in Ukraine, too little research has been conducted so far on identity in Transcarpathia by scholars, who are *not* also involved in nation-building efforts, in order to come to any definitive conclusions on the national or ethnic identity of the region's inhabitants. In his opinion, Soviet nationality policies may have successfully transformed local Slavic-speaking inhabitants into conscious Ukrainians in the same manner that Austrian policies did in the nineteenth century in Galicia, although some political activists have redefined themselves as Rusyn since 1991 (Kuzio 2005).

To this day, the Rusyn question seems to be the most important factor influencing disagreements over the political and national identification of the inhabitants of the Transcarpathian Region, although I agree with Kuzio that both Ukrainian writers' fears of Rusyn identity claims and the scope of the Rusyn movements have been exaggerated in the available literature. My impressions are in accord with Kuzio's claim that in Transcarpathia "people on the ground do not see the need to make hard decisions as to whether they are Rusyns, Ukrainians or both" (2005: 9). Similar conclusions were reached by anthropologist Katarzyna Kościeszka in her recent MA thesis, which is based on several months of fieldwork in Transcarpathia. A majority of the Slavic-speaking inhabitants of Transcarpathia met her questions regarding national belonging with confusion or indifference. The question of national belonging was often answered with words along the lines of, "According to my passport, I am Ukrainian" (Kościeszka 2010: 65–66), which, as Kościeszka notes, is "an expression of acceptance of an administrative decision that closed the borders of Transcarpathia in the south and west and opened them in the north and east. However, it also shows that the inhabitants of this land (either still or as yet) do not accept the myths and symbols of the Ukrainian state as their own. They do not imagine the Ukrainian nation as one clearly defined whole" (Kościeszka 2010: 66). Even more importantly, the author claims that the concept of nation is not one of the basic categories that shape and define social life in Transcarpathia. This is despite the fact that, in the Soviet Union, the question of national belonging was institutionalized in at least two ways: first, most of the major administrative units (republics, *krais*, and *oblast's*) of the Soviet

Union were named after their so-called titular nationalities, reinforcing the view that there is a crucial link between national groups and precise national territories; and second, nationality (i.e., ethnic affiliation) was written into the passport of every individual citizen. An individual's nationality was inherited from one of the parents regardless of where the people actually lived (Brubaker 1994). This two-pronged institutionalization of national belonging, with each prong based on different assumptions concerning the nature of the nation (one as a political-territorial community, the other as an ethnic community based on inheritance), subsequently led to a variety of conflicts, but also contributed to the development of a feeling that national identity, national pride, and national culture were of great importance for group and individual identity (Brubaker 1994: 55ff).

After World War II, Transcarpathia became a part of Soviet Ukraine. In the Soviet Union, Rusyns were not recognized as a separate nation, but were considered to be Ukrainian, which was the official nationality written in the passports of most indigenous Slavic-speaking inhabitants of Transcarpathia. Therefore, one may well suppose that the double institutionalization of national belonging would result in a strong sense of Ukrainian identification by the end of the Soviet era. This did not, however, happen. Instead of becoming conscious Ukrainians, the Transcarpathians seem to be quite oblivious to questions of national identity. Taras Kuzio writes that there is still a need for well-grounded research to show the degree to which Ukrainian identification is prevalent among the inhabitants of Transcarpathia. For several reasons, neither the official state census nor the polls organized by various NGOs (usually pro-Rusyn) provide reliable answers to this question. One reason is the above-mentioned lack of interest in national self-identification on the part of the inhabitants of the region (Kuzio 2005: 9).

In my opinion, the situation can be summarized as follows: There are small but active groups of, respectively, Ukrainian and Rusyn ideologists who publish, discuss, and quarrel over the identity of Transcarpathia's inhabitants (e.g., Markus' and Khudanych 1995; Myshanych 1991, 2012). Both positions enjoy broad support beyond the borders of Transcarpathia: the Ukrainian one in Ukrainian Galicia, and the Rusyn one among international Rusyn organizations and emigrant communities. I agree with Kuzio that the question of Rusyn identity needs more research, especially with regard to how Soviet national policies classifying the Transcarpathian Slavic-speaking population as Ukrainians influenced actual identification. According to my research and that

of some others, it would seem that there is simply not much interest in Transcarpathia in questions of national identity. As Ewa Michna (2004, 2006) and Katarzyna Kościesza (2010) write, in comparison with the Rusyn organizations in other countries, the Rusyn organizations in Transcarpathia were quite politically oriented in the 1990s, with aspirations for autonomy in addition to the usual cultural postulates (preservation of language and customs). However, in her comments on the situation in Transcarpathia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kościesza also noted that many of the opinions and phenomena that seemed to point to a desire to separate Transcarpathia from the rest of Ukraine did not have a clear national character, but were more economic in nature. Despite the efforts of small groups of Rusyn and Ukrainian ideologists who would like to imbue their fellow Transcarpathians with feelings of love and pride for one or the other nation, most Transcarpathian people, as they themselves point out, are mostly interested in living good lives and a strong national identity is not necessarily a precondition of such a life for them. They do not care much about which national state they are to be citizens of, but they do care that they be able to flourish socially and economically, both within and beyond its borders.

I have heard the following humorous commentary frequently, both from native Transcarpathians, as well as from Galician newcomers to the area. Sometimes it is just a sentence and sometimes a longer narrative. And if my interlocutor realizes that I have already spent a considerable amount of time in Transcarpathia and can therefore assume that I would know the routine, it is sometimes just a movement of the hand as if to turn a cap and visor around, from front to back and back to front again. The anecdote goes as follows: First the Czechs came, and the visor is turned to the front; then the Hungarians came, and the visor is again turned to the back; then the Soviets came, and again we turn the cap; and now the Ukrainian state, and the cap is turned once again. This is a telling commentary on the perception of relations between Transcarpathians and the changing state authorities. As the priest quoted at the beginning of this chapter said, it is unimportant to Transcarpathians which state is in power, as long as they can live well. However, when I hear the same commentary from Galicians, it becomes the expression of a negative judgment of Transcarpathians as treacherous and morally ambiguous people who do not love their country (i.e., Ukraine).

I met Ivan in 2008 and immediately got the impression that he was a Ukrainian patriot: the background picture on his computer desktop was a

Ukrainian coat of arms (*tryzub*), he wore a Ukrainian flag pin on his lapel, and he openly expressed his Ukrainian patriotism. As a forty-year-old professional historian and a devotee of local antiquity, he knew that his village was, according to some ethnographers, one of the settlements of the so-called Boyko ethnic group, while further west and south one would meet Dolynany, and further east the Huculs—all classified as Rusyn groups. He invited me to the concert of a folk ensemble featuring traditional Boyko dances, and told me that some people in his village had been quite active in the Rusyn movements in the early 1990s. He was convinced that most of them got involved because of the money coming from abroad for Rusyn organizations and flatly dismissed their activities, saying that those were in the past, and that now all the people are and feel Ukrainian. It was therefore to my great surprise when during one of our many subsequent conversations in 2011 I heard Ivan describe himself as Rusyn. Seeing my surprise, he explained to me that then, in 2008, he was still full of hope related to the Ukrainian Orange Revolution. He was proud to see the direction in which his country, Ukraine, was developing—closer to the European Union and with more laws favoring small entrepreneurs and salary rises in the public sector. However, by 2011, one year after Viktor Yanukovich had been elected president, all such enthusiasm for the Ukrainian nation had dissipated. He explained to me that earlier he had *felt good* about his Ukrainian identity, he *wanted* to be Ukrainian, and was proud of Ukraine. By 2011, however, he had considerable doubts about all this and, was quite confused by his own feelings. On the one hand, he spoke about this change with a certain shame and expressed his admiration for the Ukrainians from Galicia, who continued to stand by their Ukrainian state because they felt Ukrainian regardless of all the changing political configurations. As a Transcarpathian, however, he was no longer capable of calling himself Ukrainian with confidence because he was disillusioned with the Ukrainian state.

Ivan was not the only person in whom I detected such an interesting change. For example, I also had a series of conversations with a retired couple, both teachers, living in one of the larger Transcarpathian villages. Iosip told me that in the late 1980s and early 1990s he was an active member of the *Rukh* movement, a Ukrainian organization against the Communist regime and also in support of a Ukrainian national identity. I thus began to perceive Iosip as a representative of the pro-Ukrainian movement in Transcarpathia, whose members see the region as an integral part of the Ukrainian state. I would, however, be surprised again. During one of our meetings in 2011, Iosip asked

me if I thought the European Union should do away with its visa requirements for Transcarpathia's inhabitants.³⁰ I asked him why it should not do so for all Ukrainians. Iosip explained that he really only meant Transcarpathia because, in his opinion, the mentality of its inhabitants is European, while the inhabitants of the rest of Ukraine have a very different type of attitude toward life, state, and work. He understood that the European Union could not accept every country that wanted to join. Still, he felt that Transcarpathia had a right to be in the EU because of its history and the distinct "European" mentality of its inhabitants. He also repeated arguments given on another occasion by Ivan, asking what was the use of Ukraine anyway, with all of its corruption, lack of freedom, and closed borders. Ivan and Iosip, both Ukrainian patriots in the past who fought actively for Ukrainian independence, no longer saw a place for themselves within the contemporary Ukrainian state. It is particularly interesting that this lack of acceptance of the Ukrainian state and its policies was linked to the lack of a sense of Ukrainian national identity at the personal level.³¹

Judy Batt offers another anecdote on the subject:

A favourite Transcarpathian joke tells of a visitor to the province who, encountering an elderly resident, asks what he has seen of the world in his lifetime.

"I was born in Austria-Hungary, I went to school in Czechoslovakia, I served in the Hungarian army in World War II, then went to prison in the Soviet Union. Now here I am in independent Ukraine!"

"So you've travelled quite a bit then?"

"Oh no—I never left this village!" (Batt 2002: 155)

³⁰ Ukrainian citizens need visas to enter the EU, while EU citizens do not need a visa for stays in Ukraine of up to 90 days within a 180-day period.

³¹ This manuscript was submitted to the press before the development of the conflicts in Ukraine in 2014. The final corrections were made in August 2014, when this footnote was introduced. It seems that we can observe now a major shift in the process of identity formation in Transcarpathia, which could potentially lead to a development of more stable Ukrainian national identity. The Ukrainian state, which before the semi-open Russian-Ukrainian conflict was associated by my interlocutors with negative values (corruption, economic instability, lack of jobs), started to be associated with such values as freedom and democracy. The issue of course requires further research.

Despite the fact that only the oldest inhabitants of today's Transcarpathia have experienced changes of citizenship other than from the Soviet Union to independent Ukraine, being part of such a complex history is a constant and widespread feature of the social memory of this region. However, such attitudes toward the Ukrainian state and Ukrainian national identity are often perceived as problematic on the other side of the Carpathian Mountains, in western Ukraine.

In the summer of 2011 I met with Serhii, a local businessman, in his restaurant on the outskirts of Ternopil' in Ukrainian Galicia. He was introduced to me by a Galician currently living in Transcarpathia. The reason for our meeting was his financial sponsorship of religious objects all over Ukraine, including Transcarpathia. He was currently involved in the expansion and decoration of the Stations of the Cross that link Dzhublyk with L'viv. Within the first few minutes of our talk, it became immediately clear that Serhii supports only those religious objects in Transcarpathia that promote the unity of the region with the rest of Ukraine. He said that, in Transcarpathia, he was exclusively interested in Dzhublyk and was dismissive of my research program, which I introduced to him as focusing on the contemporary Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia. In his opinion, focusing on the specificity of Transcarpathia was unjustified at best, and could even be seen as an anti-state activity and a threat to the integrity of the Ukrainian state.

A *Sui Iuris* Eparchy within Present-Day Ukraine: A Brief History

Discussions on the status of the Transcarpathian Region in contemporary Ukraine have also been very much present within the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy (MGCE). In this particular case, the separateness of Transcarpathia from the rest of Ukraine takes on an organizational form. While *Zakarpats'ka Oblast'* is now an integral part of the Ukrainian state administrative structure, the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy is *not* a part of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC). The MGCE is instead directly supervised by the Vatican and has no official administrative relationship with the UGCC. There are thus two separate and independent structures of the Greek Catholic Church within Ukraine. The UGCC is one of the Eastern Catholic churches, with the status of a major archiepiscopate and with

aspirations to become a patriarchate.³² The MGCE is officially a part of the Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church, which has four eparchies in the United States and two administrative units in Europe: MGCE in Ukraine and the Apostolic Exarchate in the Czech Republic. However, the eparchies in the United States and in Europe are independent, and are all directly and separately subordinate to the Holy See. Therefore, the MGCE is in practice a completely independent church unit, having official linkages neither to the UGCC nor to the other eparchies of the Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church. The only official intermediary between the bishop of Mukachevo and the Holy See is the Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine. This situation is seen as problematic by many nationally conscious Ukrainians with whom I talked. In April 2011 several activists, both lay and clergy, established the Ivan Marhitych Greek Catholic Association in Uzhhorod,³³ which listed changing the administrative structure of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine as one of its principal goals. The first general assembly of the association decided to:

approach the hierarchs of the UGCC and MGCE with a call to begin the process of their integration into one Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. The very existence of the MGCE in the independent Ukrainian state is an anachronism and the cause of an artificial divide among the Greek Catholics of Ukraine. This contradicts the long-term Vatican policy of adapting the borders of individual churches to coincide with the existing state borders that are accepted by the international community.³⁴

From its first meeting on, the Ivan Marhitych Association has continued to irritate the authorities of the MGCE with repeated accusations of separatism, state treachery, and “political Rusynism” (*politichnoye Rusynstvo*), which is understood to be actively supporting the separateness of the Rusyns as a nation, not for cultural or ethnic purposes, but for exclusively political reasons, ranging from political representation to greater autonomy and separatism (Panchuk

³² See <http://www.natcath.org/mainpage/specialdocuments/taft.htm> (accessed March 28, 2012).

³³ Bishop Ivan Marhitych died in 2003. I introduce his life in more detail later in this chapter.

³⁴ Resolution of the General Assembly, April 6, 2011.

1995).³⁵ Bishop Milan Šašik, the current head of the MGCE, has continuously rejected these accusations, calling for moderation and peace instead. However, the struggle over the national and administrative allegiances of the MGCE is not limited to recent years, but has a long and complex history that we shall need to explore.

A strong eparchy with an ambiguous status: from the Union of Uzhhorod to Soviet rule

The Greek Catholic Church in Eastern Europe was established as a result of the union agreements between the Vatican and a number of the local Orthodox priests and bishops in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While today's Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church traces its history back to the Union of Brest, signed in 1596, the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo and the Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church trace their origins to the 1646 Union of Uzhhorod. The Ruthenian Byzantine Rite eparchies in the United States were established as a result of emigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from what was known as the Carpathian Rus', a territory that is currently divided among several countries (Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland), but which for many years was a part of the Habsburg Empire. The MGCE, which administered most of this territory, is therefore considered to be the historical antecedent eparchy of those in the United States. The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century agreements with the Vatican stated that, although those Orthodox priests who joined the union would come under the administrative and doctrinal jurisdiction of Rome, they would maintain the Byzantine liturgical rite. However, from the perspective of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, the two dominant churches of the region, the Greek Catholic Church remained for centuries in what can be called a "neither-nor" position. For the Orthodox Church they were "traitors," who, as Vasili Makymishyn, the head of an important Orthodox monastery in Transcarpathia, wrote in 2004, "sold themselves for Judas's money and for Rome's promises" (2004: 58). The local representatives of the Roman Catholic Church also treated the Greek Catholics

³⁵ There are many conflicts in contemporary Transcarpathia that revolve around accusations of "political Rusynism," a number of them concerning the Greek Catholic Church. See, for example, <http://zakarpattia.net.ua/News/114541-ShCHO-kryietsia-zarusynskym-ZHytiem-Blazhennoho-Teodora-Romzhi> (accessed November 8, 2013).

with suspicion for potentially being able to return to Orthodoxy. Indeed, for centuries, the Greek Catholic Church's priests and parishioners had been encouraged to adopt Latin devotional practices, architectural styles, and liturgical changes to render their historical connections to Orthodoxy less visible (Buzalka 2008; Hann 2003; Mahieu 2008; Mahieu and Naumescu 2008).

The administrative status of the MGCE was not clarified immediately after the 1646 Union of Uzhhorod, and parts of its territory were still under the administration of Orthodox bishops. In an attempt to strengthen the union with the Holy See, the Greek Catholics of the region were headed by a vicar subordinate to the Roman Catholic bishop of Eger. The administratively independent MGCE would only be created in 1771. While the seat of the eparchy was moved from Mukachevo to Uzhhorod in 1780, its name remained unchanged. Until the early nineteenth century, the MGCE included more than 800 parishes in the Kingdom of Hungary, covering territories that now belong to Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia (Magocsi and Pop 2002: 143ff). It became significantly smaller in 1818 with the establishment of a separate Eparchy of Prešov, which encompassed 192 parishes (Pekar 1997; Pronin [2005] gives a figure of 194 parishes). Further parishes were reassigned five years later to the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Oradea/Nagyvárad. Another 94 parishes were transferred in 1853 to the Eparchy of Gherla/Szamosújvár, and finally in 1912, when the Eparchy of Hajdúdorog was created, it received 68 parishes from the southwestern part of the MGCE (Pronin [2005] cites 70 parishes). Thus, by the outbreak of World War I, the Eparchy of Mukachevo was basically limited to the territory of present-day Transcarpathian Ukraine and far eastern Slovakia, with approximately 320 parishes and 450,000 members (Pronin 2005: 26).

The history of the two Eastern Catholic churches on the territory of present-day Ukraine in many ways reflects the political history of the territories of their respective administrations. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Greek Catholic Church in western Ukraine became one of the most important avenues for the formation of a Ukrainian national identity (Himka 1988, 1998; Hvat 1984), while in Transcarpathia the Greek Catholic Church became an avenue for the strengthening of the Hungarian presence in the region. Especially after the 1867 division of the Habsburg Empire into a "dual monarchy," in which the Hungarians were given full control over their part of the empire (Daren 2008: 15), the Hungarian authorities aimed to bring about the Magyarization of the elites, while a majority of the Slavic population was left with only very basic or no schooling at all (Daren 2008; Magocsi 1978). Many of the primary

schools were run by denominational organizations, the majority of which were under the auspices of the Greek Catholic Church. Instruction was first conducted in a language described in the documents as Russian or, less often, Rusyn (Polyak 2010), but with time the number of schools providing education in Hungarian or both Rusyn and Hungarian increased. Nevertheless, most of the rural population remained unschooled (Daren 2008: 16). Atanasii Pekar OSBM, a scholar of Greek Catholic Church history,³⁶ devotes an entire chapter of his outline of the history of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia to the “attempt at the Magyarization of the church in Transcarpathia” (Pekar 1997: 88ff). He sees such attempts in the repeated struggles over the legal status of the Mukachevo Eparchy; the relations between the church and the state; the support for the Hungarian liturgical language; the establishment of a separate Eparchy of Hajdúdorog; and the introduction of a number of church reforms (such as attempts to introduce the Georgian calendar and Latin as the language for liturgical books). He interprets these policies as attempts to diminish links between Transcarpathia and Galicia, as well as between Transcarpathia and Russia (Pekar 1997: 101). Hence, while in Galicia the UGCC contributed to the rise of a Ukrainian national consciousness among the general Catholic public, in Transcarpathia questions of national identity of the population in general remained of no immediate interest, while the Catholic religious elites became Magyarized. Most importantly, the Greek Catholic Church was not at the time established as the Ukrainian national church in Transcarpathia to the same degree that it was in Galicia.

Pekar (1997: 104) writes that “the persistent Magyarization led to the estrangement of the people from the clergy, and it weakened the authority of the Holy See.” This in turn contributed to the Orthodox revival in the region during the first decades of the twentieth century. Among Greek Catholic priests there were also some who saw, in the return to Orthodoxy, a way to save the Slavic population from Magyarization and the liturgical rite from further Latinization. The turn to Orthodoxy started in emigrant communities in the United States, when Aleksii Tovt, a Greek Catholic priest, converted to Orthodoxy and managed to convince some 20,000 of his fellow emigrants to join him (Pekar 1997: 108). It was indeed correspondence from emigrant communities that precipitated the Orthodox revival in Transcarpathia itself.

³⁶ Atanasii Pekar is regarded in Transcarpathia as an author who views the inhabitants of Transcarpathia as Ukrainians (Pekar 1997).

The movement there started in the village of Iza, which is known to this day as a stronghold of Orthodoxy (*tverdynia Pravoslav'ia*). It is particularly interesting that the local inhabitants did not approach the Russian patriarch with a request to send them an Orthodox priest, but rather the Serbian patriarch, as all Orthodox believers in Hungary were under his jurisdiction at the time. Nevertheless, when the Hungarian authorities decided in 1903 to stop the rise of Orthodoxy, the initiators were accused of "sustaining links with Russia" and charged with treason in the so-called Maramorosh trial of 1904, but as the Orthodox archimandrite Vasili Pronin writes in his *History of the Orthodox Church in Transcarpathia* (2005), they were only found guilty of agitation against the Greek Catholic Church. The ruling did not, however, stop the Orthodox movement in Transcarpathia, and more villages such as Velike Luchki, Nankovo, Koshelovo, Velatin, Osoi, Bilki, and Dolge also requested Orthodox priests. A second Maramorosh trial took place in 1914, with thirty-two people fined and sentenced to between twelve and fifty-seven months in prison (Pronin 2005: 455). To this day, the two Maramorosh rulings are referred to in the literature as the pinnacle of the repression of Orthodoxy. As Pekar writes, "[W]ith these rulings, the Hungarians compromised themselves in the eyes of Europe and provided the Orthodox with their own 'heroes' and 'martyrs'" (Pekar 1997: 111).

Until the 1920s the Orthodox parishes were not officially organized under any church administration and, from the point of view of the MGCE, their faithful were treated as prodigal rebels, who would, sooner or later, return to Catholicism. This position was sustained despite overwhelming numbers of conversions. Pekar writes that while there were only 400 Orthodox Christians on the territory of the MGCE in 1890, by 1930 their numbers had grown to more than 100,000. As could be expected, some more politically minded Orthodox clergymen soon launched efforts to regulate the administrative allegiance of the Transcarpathian Orthodox. Negotiations with the various patriarchates, state authorities, and local supporters continued throughout the 1920s, culminating in 1929 with the establishment of the Subcarpathian-Ruthenian Orthodox Eparchy (*Podkarpato-Russkaia Pravoslavnaia eparchia*), formally established under the jurisdiction of the Serbian patriarch (Pekar 1997: 117). The first bishop, Iosif, reorganized the initial structures of the eparchy, which was officially renamed the Orthodox Mukachevo-Priashiv Eparchy in 1931.

Most historians see the region's return to Orthodoxy as having been triggered by the pro-Hungarian character of the Greek Catholic hierarchy and some of its priests, portraying it as a rebellion of the Slavic-speaking population against Magyarization (Pekar 1997; Pop and Voloshyn 2010). As Magocsi and Pop (2002: 143) write, during the initial years of Czechoslovak rule in Transcarpathia (beginning in 1919), relations between Greek Catholic and state authorities were also strained with regard to the national question, with the former being accused of displaying pro-Hungarian attitudes. Some researchers, however, have now begun to refute the pro-Hungarian character of the Transcarpathian Greek Catholic Church, and present the rise of Orthodoxy exclusively as the result of expansion planned by emigrant communities in the United States. Such a position was, for example, expressed by Vasyl Zeikan, a theologian and Transcarpathian priest at a conference I attended in Uzhhorod in June 2011. However, while it is undeniable that many emigrants, including church hierarchs, were vitally interested in the future of Transcarpathia in the first decades of the twentieth century, and that the Orthodox movement in Transcarpathia itself was initiated by emigrants (Pop and Voloshyn 2010), the available literature clearly shows that a substantial proportion of parishioners had already become estranged from the Greek Catholic priests by the early part of the twentieth century, so the emigrants' ideas fell on fertile ground.

This estrangement was caused not only by the pro-Hungarian national stance of the clergy, but in many places also by the excessive financial demands that the clergy placed on their parishioners. For example, Andrii Svitlynets' (2002) describes the case of the village of Zadnoe (now Priborzhavs'ke), where in 1920 the Greek Catholic priest Omelian Egreshi was forcefully removed from the village by his parishioners, who decided to convert to Orthodoxy. Although he was Hungarian, his nationality was, according to Svitlynets', not the main reason for his expulsion. In interviews, the oldest inhabitants of the village acknowledged that Egreshi was respected, but the parishioners had problems with his wife, who burdened the villagers excessively with work on the priest's land and in terms of taxes. She was remembered as a harsh person with no patience for delays in work or payment of taxes, even if compelling reasons were given. The priest and his wife were eventually removed from the village, and Priborzhavs'ke is today one of the most homogenously Orthodox villages in the Irshava District.

In the face of Orthodox expansion and following the incorporation of Transcarpathia into Czechoslovakia, some of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic

bishops tried to revitalize Catholicism in Transcarpathia, despite divisions and disagreements within the church, often based on national sympathies (Pekar 1997: 123ff). One of the measures supported by Bishop Petro Hebei (head of the MGCE between 1924 and 1931) involved support for the intensification of the work of the Basilian fathers, who at the time were active in propagating Ukrainian national identity in Galicia (Shkrab'yuk 2005). The Basilian fathers organized missions with the aim of stopping Orthodox expansion, established schools and prayer groups, published Greek Catholic calendars and the journal *Blahovisnyk*, which remains popular among Greek Catholics to this day (Pekar 1997: 127ff). Many of the monks came from Galicia and their activities resulted not only in a slowdown of Orthodox expansion but also in the considerable rise of a sense of unity with Ukrainians beyond the Carpathian Mountains. As Ivan Paslavski writes, the head of the Galician Province of the Basilian Order arrived in Transcarpathia in 1920 with a group of monks who "had been through the good school of Galician Ukrainian patriotism" (2003: 196). In 1932 a separate St. Nikolaus Province of the Basilian Order was established for Transcarpathia, while monks continued to be educated in Galicia. It would seem that one of the main aims of the Basilian Order was "the establishment among the local Transcarpathian Rusyns of a feeling of genetic and cultural unity with Galician and Dnieper brothers, i.e., Ukrainians, the creation among them of attitudes supportive of statehood and independence, and a devotion to the pan-Ukrainian national idea" (Paslavski 2003: 203).

However, although the influence of the Basilian Order remains beyond any doubt, the pro-Ukrainian course did not become firmly entrenched in the eparchy in this short time, neither among the faithful nor among the church hierarchy. On the eve of World War II, the MGCE was headed by Bishop Oleksandr Stoika, who, according to Atanasii Pekar, was of pro-Hungarian orientation and supported the understanding of Transcarpathians as a specific ethnic group separate from Ukrainians (1997: 143–144). The division within the MGCE regarding national principles became readily visible when, in October 1938, the Greek Catholic priest Avgustyn Voloshyn became the new president of the recently established Subcarpathian Rus' Autonomous Region, which would soon change its name to Carpatho-Ukraine (*Karpats'ka Ukraina*). When Uzhhorod and some other southern territories of Czechoslovakia were lost to Hungary as the result of the 1938 Vienna Agreement, Avgustyn Voloshyn established Khust as the seat of his government. At the same time, however, the seat of the eparchy and its bishop, Oleksandr Stoika, remained in Uzhhorod

(in Hungary at that time). As a result, the Vatican sent an apostolic representative to Khust, Bishop Dionizii Nyaradii, who led the Greek Catholic Church in Carpatho-Ukraine until its dissolution in March 1939, when Stoika was reinstated as the bishop of the entire territory of the MGCE.

It is necessary to say a few words on Carpatho-Ukraine, as its establishment and the fact that it was led by a Greek Catholic priest have played an important role in local struggles over national identity in Transcarpathia and in the MGCE to the present day. Carpatho-Ukraine was first established in 1938 as a result of the Munich Conference and subsequent decisions of the Vienna Arbitration process that strengthened the position of Hungary in the region as a supporter of Nazi Germany and, at the same time, led to the destabilization and eventual dissolution of Czechoslovakia. Part of what at that time was called Subcarpathian Rus' was transferred to Hungary, while the Carpatho-Ukraine Autonomous Region was established in the remaining part. It was first headed by Andrii Brovdii, who was a representative of the local Russophile faction (Magocsi 1996: 614), but he was quickly accused by the Czechoslovak government of being an enemy of the state, and the position was passed on to Avgustyn Voloshyn, who was regarded as a representative of the Ukrainophile faction. In November 1938, the Carpatho-Ukrainian government authorized the creation of a local military force known as the Carpathian *Sich*. According to Magocsi (1996: 614), this group was predominantly composed of Ukrainians from Galicia who had crossed the mountains to help counter the Hungarian attacks. Autonomous Carpatho-Ukraine did not exist for long, however. On March 16, 1939, Hungarian troops attacked Carpatho-Ukraine and largely destroyed the *Sich* military units. Transcarpathia came under Hungarian rule and would remain so through the end of World War II.

To this day, those few months that Carpatho-Ukraine existed are frequently invoked in discussions concerning the national identity of the Slavic-speaking inhabitants of Transcarpathia. For some, the very existence of Carpatho-Ukraine is proof that, despite Magyarization policies, Ukrainian identity had gained considerable traction among the local population. As Vegesh et al. (2009) write, "[T]hanks to the activities of Ukrainian political parties and associations, and some cultural and social activists, the national consciousness of the local population grew. The local people actually underwent an evolution from being Hungarian Rusyns to Transcarpathian Ukrainians, through the self-realization of their identity and towards the idea of political unity with all of the Ukrainian people" (2009: 6). On the other hand, for some Rusyn

historians, Carpatho-Ukraine was an example of an aggressive political action organized by Ukrainians from Galicia with some initial backing from Nazi Germany, and had nothing to do with the identity claims of the local inhabitants (Pop and Pop 2005: 199ff). While history is always constructed from the present, in the case of Carpatho-Ukraine, present-day political concerns and ideologies may have gone exceedingly far in obscuring the original aims and commitments that motivated the area's leaders and their followers in the late 1930s. What is important for my argument is that the very existence of Carpatho-Ukraine, however brief, is used in arguments concerning both the Ukrainian identity of Transcarpathia's inhabitants and the Dzhublyk apparition site.

During World War II, Transcarpathia was a part of Hungary. Pop and Voloshyn write that, while this was a difficult time for the Orthodox Church, which was not receiving support from the authorities (2010: 275ff), the MGCE continued to persist under the leadership of Oleksandr Stoika until his death in 1943, and later under Bishop Theodore Romzha with some other short-term bishops in between. Theodore Romzha was the one who led the church at the time of Soviet expansion into Transcarpathia. On June 29, 1945, the territory of Transcarpathia officially became a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and thus the USSR (Pekar 1997: 148). At that time, representatives of the Orthodox Church in Transcarpathia, undoubtedly encouraged by Soviet authorities, had already led negotiations with the Moscow Patriarchate on a change of jurisdiction. The final transfer of the Orthodox eparchy in Transcarpathia from the Serbian to the Moscow Patriarchate took place on October 22, 1945 (Pop and Voloshyn 2010: 289). As for the Greek Catholic Church, its liquidation was only a matter of time. The UGCC was officially dissolved in March 1946, when, after the arrests of the bishops, the church assembly decided to reunite with the Orthodox Church under the rule of the Moscow Patriarchate. In Transcarpathia, however, there was no formal council of Greek Catholic clergy, not even one that was forced or put on for show, which could have formally made such a decision. According to many Greek Catholic writers, this was due to efforts of Theodore Romzha, the young head of the eparchy, who, with his eye on what was happening in other parts of the USSR, decided that the most effective tactic to save the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia was to prevent even one member of the clergy from agreeing to reunite with the Orthodox Church under Soviet pressure. Romzha thus invested great effort into working with priests, convincing them that reunification could not even be considered. Those who expressed any doubts were convinced by

Romzha either to leave the country or to abandon the priesthood altogether (Pekar 1997: 152–153). His strategies proved to be quite successful, but he was killed in a plot on November 1, 1947, most probably organized by the Soviet authorities (Pushkash 2001). After his death, attacks on the Greek Catholic Church intensified, with all of the church's property confiscated or transferred to the Orthodox Church. The Catholic clergy were soon approached again with the demand to approve their reunification with the Orthodox Church, and this time the action was more successful. Finally, on August 28, 1949, during the Orthodox liturgy conducted in the former Basilian cloister in Mukachevo, the end of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia was publically announced. A new period of underground activity would begin for the Greek Catholic Church.

The structure of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia during the Soviet era

The period of the underground existence of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia under Soviet rule has not been sufficiently investigated thus far. Most of the publications concerning this period of underground activity have the quality of memoirs or biographical notes on the clergy, with few attempts at analysis. At the same time, those few existing works as well as my own research, suggest that this period is crucial in terms of understanding the present situation of the MGCE. First, a particular type of relationship developed between religion as an organization and religious institutions during the period, as explored in more detail in the following chapters. Second, pro-Ukrainian attitudes were strengthened during this time among a sizeable group of Transcarpathian clergy and laity who attended the underground services. Third, the necessary dispersal of clandestine clerical activities set in motion the development of several strong and contradictory visions for the future of the MGCE, which in turn resulted in the clashes that characterize ecclesiastical life in Transcarpathia to this day. Fourth, references to the underground period now serve as important legitimization strategies for initiatives and activities of the most diverse character.

Some of the most useful insights into the underground activities of the Greek Catholic clergy in Transcarpathia have been provided by the works of Volodymyr Fenych, the head of the History Faculty at the Uzhhorod State

University (2004, 2007), and Danyl Bendas, a lecturer at the Uzhhorod Greek Catholic Seminary (1999, 2001, 2002a, 2002b). They are both involved as advisors in the work of an official MGCE commission responsible for the preparation of the beatification of Soviet-era martyrs, especially Petro Oros and Oleksandr Khira. Danyl Bendas has gone to great lengths to collect and systematize source materials on the history of the MGCE, including its underground period, and has been extremely helpful in my research as well. This subsection does not aspire to be an exhaustive or flawless analysis of the underground period. In my research I have not focused exclusively or even predominantly on that period. I do hope, however, that these few initial comments might encourage further research into this important and fascinating issue. Taras Kuzio (2005) writes, with regard to contemporary work on the Rusyn-Ukrainian question, that very few researchers work on these issues who are not also supporters of one particular identity option or another. Moreover, even people who do not necessarily have any specific ideological agenda are in danger of being regarded as ideologists the moment they write about anything that can be interpreted in terms of national identity. The most prominent example of this is Paul Robert Magocsi, whose books on Ukrainian history are considered to be among the best scholarly works available, but who is at the same time often accused of being a Rusyn nation-builder (Arel 2011; Kuzio 2011; Martin 2001; Motyl 2011). The field of church history is no exception to this, and writing about it often feels like walking through a minefield. I do hope, however, that I will be able to expose some of the mines without myself being destroyed in the process.

After the death of Bishop Theodore Romzha, the consistory handed the MGCE leadership over to Father Mykola Murani, who was not consecrated as a bishop, but continued to administer the eparchy. According to Bendas (1999), Murani was arrested in June 1949, imprisoned, and sent to a gulag, from whence he returned in 1956 to become involved in the life of the underground church until his death in 1979. He was officially nominated by the Holy See to be an apostolic administrator of the underground MGCE in the mid-1950s. Bendas also writes that Murani named Ivan Semedii to be his successor in 1976. Ivan Semedii became the first head of the MGCE after its reestablishment in 1989.

What seems a rather straightforward description of the structures of the underground church is a matter of fierce discussion within today's MGCE. From the point of view of contemporary church politics, the question of continuity, linked to the hierarchy of the underground Greek Catholic Church,

is of utmost importance, and the findings of Bendas require further interpretation. Murani was a priest, not a bishop, but were there in fact any Greek Catholic bishops in Transcarpathia after the death of Theodore Romzha, and if so, who were they? Were they consecrated in a legitimate manner, and if so, were they the only ones with the legitimate authority to consecrate priests and other bishops? Taking the circumstances into account, to what extent were the underground Greek Catholic priests required to seek their bishops' approval and guidance, and in what matters? In short, how much did religious organization still matter in the underground religious life? Most of such discussions focus on two prominent figures of the underground Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia—Ivan Semedii and Ivan Marhitych—who would become symbols of the two opposing visions for the future of the MGCE in the 1990s. Both Marhitych and Semedii, through their actions as well as through their symbolic presence, have also played an important role in structuring the relationship between the Dzhublyk apparition site and the MGCE authorities.

Ivan Marhitych and Ivan Semedii were both born in 1921 in two different villages in Transcarpathia's Vynogradiv District. They went to the same gymnasium (high school) in Khust and to the Greek Catholic Seminary together. Still, their reflections on the events of their youth, the underground period, and the future of the MGCE after its relegalization could not have been more different. They were both interviewed (Semedii in 1993 and Marhitych in 2000) by researchers from the Ukrainian Catholic University in L'viv as a part of a project on recollections of the underground activities of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine.³⁷ They were asked similar questions about their families, education, holy orders, and underground activities. For example, they were both asked about the significance of their studies at the Khust gymnasium. They attended the school during the time of the short-lived Carpatho-Ukraine autonomous region, whose capital was Khust, and the gymnasium, staffed by teachers of various nationalities (Russian, Ukrainian, Czech), was known as a site of political activities of diverse character (Markus' and Khudanych 1994). Marhitych and Semedii both regarded the time in Khust as a very important part of their lives. They were also both members of *Plast*, a Ukrainian scout organization. Still, while Semedii told the interviewers that he was brought up

³⁷ Archive of the Ukrainian Catholic University in L'viv. Here quoted are files P-1-1-229 and P-1-1-1148.

to distinguish strongly between lay matters and church matters, and therefore refused to comment directly on matters of nationalism and education, insisting that the political events in Khust did not really influence the lives of the pupils, Marhitych explored the theme extensively in his interview. He said that as a primary school student he had already become a member of *Plast* and *Prosvita*, both Ukrainian patriotic organizations established in his village by Mykola Medved', a schoolteacher from Galicia. Marhitych remembered his teacher explaining to him that Rusyns and Ukrainians formed one nation, and that those were just two words to describe the same people, the same way that Magyars are Hungarians and Persians are Iranians. Marhitych made it clear that, from that point on, there was no separation in his mind between his religious education and his national education. He also remembered that the division in Khust among Slavic-speaking pupils was not between Rusyns and Ukrainians, but between Ukrainians and Russians, who were also Greek Catholic and Orthodox, respectively. He added that such a division exists in Transcarpathia to the present day and that insisting on the existence of Rusyns as a nation separate from Ukrainians, a stance that is also perpetuated by the Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, only lends political support to the imperial aims of Moscow. Marhitych's Ukrainian patriotism was thus strengthened by his time in school in Khust, especially during the Carpatho-Ukraine period (1938–1939). After the Hungarian occupation of Transcarpathia and continuing into his time at the Uzhhorod Seminary, he was a member of an underground Ukrainian patriotic organization, for which he was arrested by the Hungarian authorities and sentenced to two years in prison. After this period of imprisonment, he finished his studies, received his holy orders in 1946 and, after a brief period in Vynohradiv, became a parish priest in Rakhiv. From there he was expelled by the Soviets and returned to his native village of Borzhavs'ke.

It is interesting how Marhitych described the beginning of his underground activity under Soviet rule. At first, he prayed only with two other priests in the house where they lived together, but soon people began to ask them to conduct services in other houses. Initially, they were not sure if this would be at all appropriate, as such an event had not been discussed during their seminary studies. The matter would, however, be resolved when, one night in 1949, Marhitych had a dream about the late Bishop Romzha, who advised him to accept invitations for underground services in private homes. From that day forward, Marhitych and four priests with whom he closely collaborated

(Ivan Chenheri, Petro Oros, Ivan Horynets'kii, and Ivan Roman³⁸) conducted liturgies and other rites in the houses of other Greek Catholics. In 1951, Marhitych was arrested while conducting a liturgy in a private house and sentenced to twenty-five years in prison for anti-Soviet activities. He was exiled and released after two years as part of an amnesty agreement, and subsequently worked on a collective farm, while continuing his underground activities as a priest unabated.

The biography of Ivan Semedii appears to be less eventful. After his ordination, Semedii stayed in Uzhhorod to work at MGCE headquarters. After its dissolution, he managed to find, albeit with great difficulty, secular work as a driver. He, too, served Greek Catholics in secrecy but, as he himself admitted in his interview, his pastoral work was not very extensive. He visited only a few trusted families on a regular basis, and only once a year, just before Easter, did he serve others who came to confess their sins, to have their children baptized, or to have their marriages blessed. Still, he did maintain close contact with Mykola Murani, the underground administrator of the eparchy. In 1976 Murani told Semedii that he should take on the leadership of the eparchy after his death and, in 1978, he was secretly consecrated as a bishop by Oleksandr Khira, who occasionally visited Transcarpathia from his exile in Kazakhstan.

Ivan Marhitych's and Ivan Semedii's opinions regarding the degree of structuration within the underground MGCE were very different. While a considerable part of the Ukrainian Catholic University interview with Semedii was devoted to the issue of secret episcopal ordinations in Transcarpathia, therefore suggesting that the official structures of MGCE continued to function under Soviet rule, Marhitych told his interviewer that "in the underground we had no official bishops". Nevertheless, he regarded the question of hierarchy in the underground church as crucial, and immediately upon returning from exile, he sought to find out if the eparchy had retained its hierarchical structure. According to him, however, only much later did he find out that Theodore Romzha had consecrated Oleksandr Khira as bishop in secret. As Khira was sentenced to exile in 1949 and spent the rest of his life in Kazakhstan, only rarely coming to Transcarpathia for short visits, it was not at all clear, according to Marhitych, to what extent he aspired to lead the eparchy in practical matters. Marhitych added that he had not learned, until even later, about the episcopal ordinations of Iosif Holovach, Ivan Semedii, and Konstantin Sabov (all

³⁸ See <http://www.mgce.uz.ua/post.php?id=599> (accessed November 8, 2013).

conducted by Oleksandr Khira). Marhitych also claimed that the underground priests carried on as if there were no bishops. Ivan Semedii, on the other hand, pointed out that, despite all the secrecy, it was clear that Oleksandr Khira was the bishop and Murani the administrator, legitimately in charge of the MGCE. He appreciated the initial help that was given to the underground Transcarpathian eparchy by bishops from Galicia, who consecrated numerous priests for Transcarpathia in the initial years of Soviet rule, but also said that the local bishop and his representative, in this case Khira and Murani, respectively, soon assumed the leadership of the underground MGCE. He also said that, in agreement with the Vatican, Theodore Romzha secretly ordained two other priests as bishops in addition to Oleksandr Khira. This was done in anticipation of Soviet repression and to ensure that the MGCE never remained without a leader. All of this was kept secret and the identity of only one bishop—Khira—was ever revealed to the underground clerical community. The identity of the two other bishops was not even known to Semedii at the time of the interview in 1993.

Interestingly, Marhitych was also ordained as bishop but it was done by Sofron Dmitrenko, a Galician underground bishop and this did not occur until 1987. Why did this occur at that time? Were Marhitych or Dmitrenko aware that Semedii was the head of the underground eparchy? In 2001, Iurii Kossei published a book on the life and work of Iosif Holovach, an auxiliary bishop of the MGCE and a close associate of Bishop Semedii. In the book, the author reprinted several letters, including correspondence from the 1990s between Iosif Holovach and Myroslav Liubachivskii and other UGCC hierarchs, in which Golovach complains about the activities of Marhitych and questions the legitimacy of his 1987 ordination as bishop. In one letter, he writes to Liubachivskii that, after Marhitych's clearly pro-Ukrainian activities came to light, "it became clear why you had to consecrate Bishop Ivan Marhitych for us, which was done in grave violation of Church legal procedures" (Kossei 2001: 537). During his interview in 2000, moreover, Bishop Marhitych confirmed Holovach's insinuations himself, explaining that, in the underground period, Semedii forbade the Transcarpathian underground priests to mention the names of Galician bishops during the liturgy, which was, according to him, usual practice for many of them. There is a part of the Divine Liturgy in which the priest invites parishioners to join in a common prayer for particular hierarchs, first for the Pope and then for the local bishop. But who was the local bishop during the underground period? Marhitych said that he and his followers prayed for

Iosip Slipyi and Myroslav Liubachivskii, who were the bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. This was openly opposed by Semedii, who said that the priests of the MGCE should pray instead for the Transcarpathian bishops, Oleksandr Khira and later himself. This divergence within the MGCE was apparently recognized by the Vatican as well. A letter from the Vatican was brought by Father Vorotniak to Bishop Dmitrenko permitting the ordination of Marhitych as bishop, with the express intention that he care for and represent the Ukrainian faithful in Transcarpathia. Bishop Dmitrenko subsequently undertook Marhitych's ordination.

One important aspect of the underground situation that continues to influence internal divisions within the MGCE to this day was the underground education of priests. In the initial years of Soviet rule, underground ordinations applied to those who had not managed to finish their studies before the delegalization of the Greek Catholic Church. Few were consecrated in the 1960s and 1970s, and a clear increase in underground education and ordination of Greek Catholic priests would only come in the 1980s (Bendas 2001, 2002a, 2002b), when two parallel and separate paths to underground priesthood were established for new candidates in Transcarpathia. Starting in 1981, Marhitych conducted regular courses with a group of fourteen (later reduced to twelve) candidates for priesthood, who would receive their ordination as priests from Bishop Sofron Dmitrenko in 1988. The teachers at this underground seminary were Marhitych and two Basilian monks, Petro Pavlo Madiar and Antoni Mondik. According to Bendas (personal communication, 2008), this was the only form of group education for future priests in Soviet Transcarpathia. The other path involved individual preparation on a one-to-one basis by such priests as Elemir Ortutai, Mikola Liakhovych, Meletii Malynych, and Georgii Churhovich (Bendas 2001: 8). The candidates instructed in this manner most often did not know about each other, did not meet, and did not therefore have the chance to develop close links.

The situation was different for the pupils of Marhitych. First of all, many of them were related, the most prominent case being the Brovdii family, as the course was attended by Iurii Brovdii and his five sons. Secondly, after their ordination in 1988, and especially once the relegalization of the Greek Catholic Church had become only a matter of time, Marhitych directed his former pupils to Transcarpathian villages, carefully managing their presence and durations of stay, and having them go where they were needed most or transferring them to other places as he saw fit. According to many of my interlocutors, he managed

in this way to secure numerous parishes for the Greek Catholic Church, as the physical presence of a priest of a given denomination often played a pivotal role in local decisions on ecclesiastical affiliation. It is worth noting that Bishop Marhitych single-handedly directed his former pupils to tackle particular tasks and assignments, as was confirmed by those of his former pupils whom I interviewed. There was indeed widespread agreement that there was no time for consultations to be undertaken with Uzhhorod, as rapid and decisive actions were necessary if there was to be a smooth return of parishes from Orthodoxy to Greek Catholicism.

In his 2001 article on the education of priests in the MGCE during the underground period, Fr. Danyl Bendas emphasized that all priests apart from those who had been instructed by Marhitych were consecrated underground by either Transcarpathian or Galician bishops, but always with the permission of the general vicar of the MGCE, first Mikola Murani and then Ivan Semedii. According to Bendas, the educational activities of Marhitych, as well as his own ordination as bishop, were conducted without the knowledge of the underground hierarchy of the MGCE and were, therefore, in violation of canonical procedures.³⁹ The claim of Marhitych that such a hierarchical structure did not exist is, according to Bendas, at best a misunderstanding and at worst an outright lie. He writes:

The authorities and the clergy of the underground Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy were confused when Ivano-Frankiv'sk Bishop Sofron Dmitrenko consecrated Ivan Marhitych as bishop for Transcarpathia in L'viv on September 10, 1987. This was done not only without the knowledge and permission of MGCE Bishop Ioann Semedii, but also without the knowledge of L'viv Archbishop Volodymyr Sterniuk. Fr. Ivan Marhitych, together with monk Pavel Madiar, organized the training and preparation for clerical cadres in his native village of Borzhavs'ke, and on March 27, 1988, without the knowledge and permission of the ruling bishop of the underground MGCE, Bishop Sofron Dmitrenko ordained eleven underground priests: 73-year-old Ivan Brovdii

³⁹ In his diploma thesis devoted to the parish of Borzhavs'ke (defended at the Uzhhorod Greek Catholic Seminary), Viktor Brovdii claims that Semedii knew about the planned consecration of the priests educated by Marhitych, and that, while Marhitych was afraid to conduct the ceremony himself, he gave permission to Sofron Dmitrenko to do so (Vi. Brovdii 2008). This shows very clearly how most discussions of the details of underground church activity actually concern not the past, but the present.

and his five sons, Vasyl, Mikhailo, Iurii, Petr, and Andrii, as well as Mikhailo Kulka, Mikhailo Danilash, Vasyl Zeikan, Mikhailo Pohoriliak, and Ivan Terninko. (Bendas 2002a: 8)⁴⁰

In sum, when the process to relegalize the Greek Catholic Church began in the Soviet Union, the underground Eparchy of Mukachevo seemed already to be clearly divided into competing political camps. This fracture, represented by the split between Ivan Semedii and Ivan Marhitych, was also reflected in parallel systems of the underground education of clergy, especially in the 1980s. While the competition over the identity and status of the MGCE was especially strong during the late 1980s and early 1990s, it continues to shape the life of the eparchy to this day, reemerging in discourse in different forms and under the most surprising of circumstances. In the next section, I show how the figures of Ivan Marhitych and Ivan Semedii came to stand for two visions for the contemporary MGCE, even, or rather especially, after the deaths of the two leaders in 2003 and in 2008, respectively (figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 Tomb with portrait of Ivan Marhitych in a church in Borzhavs'ke village, August 2008

⁴⁰ I interviewed Iurii, Petr, and Andrii Brovdii, as well as Mikhailo Danilash, Vasyl Zeikan (here senior), and Ivan Terninko. Of those only one did not clearly follow a pro-Ukrainian approach in his pastoral practice.

The post-Soviet period

In the late 1980s, Ivan Marhitych was very active in the political arena in support of the relegalization of the Greek Catholic Church (Va. Brovdii 2008; Vi. Brovdii 2008). Many accounts of his secret trips to Moscow, undertaken despite many problems and KGB surveillance, have been related to me by his pupils, parishioners, and even his political opponents. There is no doubt that Marhitych fearlessly and repeatedly asserted the existence of the Greek Catholic Church and demanded its legalization. On August 4, 1987, both Semedii and Marhitych, together with Ivano-Frankivsk's underground bishop Pavel Vasylyk and a group of other clergy, monks, nuns, and laypeople, signed a letter to Pope John Paul II, in which they informed him that the Greek Catholic Church existed and aimed to operate openly.⁴¹ A copy of the letter was sent to Mikhail Gorbachev (Pipash 2013). Marhitych signed the letter as a priest, as he would not be ordained as a bishop until the following month. A year later, in September 1988, Semedii celebrated his first open-air Divine Liturgy in Uzhhorod as the head bishop (Bendas 2002b: 8). Marhitych also celebrated public open-air liturgies in his own village of Borzhavs'ke.⁴² On September 25, 1989, the two bishops, Semedii and Marhitych, went to the Regional Executive Committee (*Oblvykonkom*) with a group of thirty-five clergy and laypeople, and demanded the registration of Greek Catholic parishes (Pipash 2013). Three months later, the Greek Catholic Church was relegalized in the USSR.

In June 1990 an extraordinary Episcopal Conference took place in Rome, at which both Semedii and Marhitych were in attendance. It was at this conference that the two men's visions for the MGCE's future clashed openly. It is difficult to establish what exactly happened in the corridors and behind closed doors at the Vatican, and I have heard many different versions of those events. Apparently, Marhitych presented the case for the integration of the MGCE into the structures of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, while Semedii, supported by Auxiliary Bishop Iosif Holovach, disagreed and demanded separate administration for the MGCE under the direct supervision of the Vatican. The second position won out, and the MGCE received *sui iuris* status, remaining separate from the church's seat in L'viv (Bendas 2002b; Fenych 2004: 57). On October 31, 1990, the Uzhhorod city council registered a statute

⁴¹ See www.risu.org.ua.

⁴² According to supporters of Marhitych, he was the first to celebrate public liturgies in Transcarpathia (Va. Brovdii 2008: 34).

confirming the MGCE's status under the direct supervision of Rome. The same year, a process was launched for the official registration of the Greek Catholic parishes in Transcarpathia.

In this way, the MGCE was reestablished with 209 parishes (compared to the 289 it had directly before its liquidation) (Magocsi and Pop 2002: 143), and as a structure separate from the rest of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine. However, the fight between the Ukrainian unity faction and the *sui iuris* faction did not in fact end with the 1990 Vatican decision. Because of the ways in which religious communities are classified in Ukrainian law, the pro-Ukrainian option still had an array of arguments and practical solutions available to fight for its cause. According to the 1991 Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations,⁴³ Ukraine follows the principle of having a non-institutionalized (non-organizational in my vocabulary) model of religious life (Jelenski 2003). This can be seen in part as deriving from the country's Soviet heritage. According to the law, religious groupings (communities, centers and administrations, monasteries, religious brotherhoods, missionary societies, seminaries, religious schools, etc.) can register their statutes with the state and become recognized as legal persons.⁴⁴ The basic type of religious grouping is the religious community (*relihiina hromada*), that is, a group of at least ten believers registered with the state. Although the law only demands that such communities be registered if they require recognition as legal persons, this registration is common in practice. Formal registration was encouraged by the Greek Catholic Church after its relegalization, as it provided a legal ground for negotiations over property with the Orthodox Church. These religious communities have the right to freely choose (and later change) to which religious administration (*relihiine upravlinniya*) they wish to belong. Communities submit their request to the headquarters of the church of their choice, applying for recognition and for a priest to be provided.

In 2006 and 2007, I spent some time looking through piles of documents left by Ivan Marhitych in his house in Borzhavs'ke. They were deposited in several boxes stored in the garage of one of his main supporters. I was given access to them upon the reference of a priest widely known for his pro-Ukrai-

⁴³ Please note that here the term "organization" is just a literal translation of the Ukrainian term used and not an analytical term as defined by me in the Introduction.

⁴⁴ See <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=987-12> (accessed January 25, 2011). In June 2012, a new version of this law was accepted that clarified the legal status of religious formations and the way in which they have to be registered.

nian sympathies, who was personally recommended and sent by Marhitych to the seminary in L'viv after he had problems being accepted to the Uzhorod Seminary in the 1990s. The expansive archive bears witness to the multifaceted and wide-ranging activities of Bishop Marhitych, including MGCE administration matters. It contains his correspondence with Myroslav Liubachivskii, the head of the UGCC, and with the Vatican, documentation of the activities of parishioners, and copies of letters and publications of other people, including Marhitych's opponents. The documents also contain protocols of parish meetings dated from the first half of the 1990s, signed by dozens of parishioners. In one such document, we read:

The Greek Catholics of Borzhavs'ke Village wish to be in sacred ecclesiastical unity with all of the Greek Catholics in Ukraine as, according to the words of the first awakener (*buditel'*) of the Transcarpathian Rusyn-Ukrainians, the notable Greek Catholic priest, writer, and poet Father Oleksandr Dukhnovych, they are of ONE FAITH, ONE RITE, and ONE LANGUAGE, because, as Dukhnovych wrote to Galicians, "Beyond the mountains they are ours, not strangers, and the Carpathian Mountains will not divide us forever."⁴⁵

While this was a free-form letter, the archive also contains ready-made form letters from 1997 to be filled in once a parish selected a particular administration. The archive contains several types of forms, but they all contain motions for unity with the UGCC, phrased, for example, in the following notice to call a meeting to discuss a status change:

Since the relegalization of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine, our faithful have sincerely wanted to be united with all of the Greek Catholics in Ukraine, but our wishes have been ignored to the present day. As the Church Canons, the Ukrainian Constitution, and, specifically, the Ukrainian Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations (paragraph 8, line 2, and paragraph 14) allow us to decide to belong to the Archbishopric of L'viv and to the one Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine in unity with the Pope in Rome, we have to discuss and decide on changes to our statute.

⁴⁵ Protocol of the general meeting of the Greek Catholic parish in Borzhavs'ke, November 1, 1992 (capitalization in the original).

The form ended with a suggestion as to how to conclude the meeting:

To decide on the changes to our statute and to ask the Transcarpathian state administration to register those changes and, in agreement with them, to re-register our parish as part of the Archbishopric of L'viv in unity with the Pope in Rome.

Even if it is difficult to establish how successful such actions were, it is clear that they were supervised by Ivan Marhitych. His archive, as far as I know, is still guarded by his followers, who, they have told me, are afraid that the documents would be either destroyed or confiscated if they were given to the present eparchial authorities. What is more important, the actions encouraging the transfer of parishes to the UGCC in the 1990s were repeated later on, even after Marhitych's death. During my field research in 2011, I again heard that some priests wished to initiate a process of unification with the UGCC for particular parishes and other religious organizations. One such instance involved Dzhublyk. In 2011, Father Atanasii Tsyipesh told me that he was still considering the idea of officially placing Dzhublyk under the jurisdiction of the UGCC, although one of his closest collaborators was of the opinion that this was in fact a remnant of past wishes and aspirations. He believed that Dzhublyk was instead focusing on negotiations with regard to its position within the administrative structure of the MGCE.

To the best of my knowledge, no parish has, in practice, actually united with the UGCC, as the MGCE and UGCC authorities did not want to enter into open conflict. I am not sure if the documents signed by parishioners that I saw in Marhitych's archive had even been sent to the headquarters of either the UGCC or MGCE, although the protocols of priests' conferences held both in the MGCE and UGCC, copies of which were also stored in Marhitych's archive, proved that the authorities were aware of the existence of such motions. However, as I was refused access to recent MGCE documents, I could not see which documents reached the eparchial headquarters. The official reason for this refusal, given by Bishop Milan Šašik, was that the documents could be released for research purposes only after fifty years had passed from their date of issue. Researchers from the University of Uzhhorod told me that they faced similar problems, as there is limited willingness on the part of church authorities to allow internal church politics to be scrutinized by outsiders. Still, the materials in Marhitych's archive, publications freely available in such journals

as *Blahovisnyk*,⁴⁶ my interviews with church officials of various ranks, as well as materials that I received directly from some of them, show that neither the eparchial authorities nor the Vatican were interested in the MGCE changing its status. In his letter to all MGCE priests, dated December 11, 1995, the head bishop, Ivan Semedii, commented on a number of planned changes to the status of the MGCE as presented by the Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine, Antonio Franko, on August 31, 1995. Taking into account the internal struggles that took place in the MGCE, the Vatican suggested that the MGCE could be elevated to the status of ecclesiastical province (*mitropolia*), the bishop of which would take part in the UGCC synod and would “respect and revere” the major archbishop of L’viv as the head of the Catholic Church of Byzantine Rite in Ukraine. This suggestion was rejected by Semedii as limiting in practice the administrative independence of the MGCE.

The arguments for and against the unification of the MGCE with the UGCC were probably most clearly summarized in two documents: a brochure by Father Iurii Sabov titled, “On the Status and Subordination of the MGCE” (1994) and a reply to Sabov’s argument written by a Basilian monk, Atanasii Pekar, and sent to Petro Pavlo Madiar, the head of the largest Basilian monastery in Transcarpathia at that time and a supporter of the unification approach. Sabov divided his arguments into historical, canonical-legal, and liturgical aspects. According to him, the two unions of Orthodox priests and bishops (1595 in Brest and 1646 in Uzhhorod) should be seen as the separate beginnings of two discrete units of the Catholic Church of the Byzantine Rite: the L’viv Metropolis for Ukrainians and the multinational MGCE for Rusyns, Slovaks, Romanians, Hungarians, Serbs, and Croats. According to Sabov, those unions led to the establishment of two separate liturgical traditions that were also replicated among emigrants to the United States, where separate eparchies for Ukrainians and Transcarpathians were established. Sabov refutes the claims of those who present the history of the MGCE as a “constant but failed struggle for inclusion in the Kyiv-Galicia and L’viv Ecclesiastical provinces.” As he puts it, the MGCE is situated at the “center of Europe, and at the crossroads of political interests as well as economic and cultural connections between the West and the East” (Sabov 1994: 2). He said that 1990 was the first year that the question of subordination to the Archbishop of L’viv was considered by Rome. He also mentions the above-described requests by parishioners to be included

⁴⁶ The official journal of the MGCE.

in the UGCC, but undermines their importance by saying that either “they were signed only by a few nationalistically minded activists” (3) or forged outright. According to him, the MGCE “unites various national-ethnic groups, is multinational, or put better, supranational. Subordination to the UGCC, which is a church of one nation with a strong Ukrainian national character and tradition, would lead to regrettable consequences.” (3) With regard to liturgical tradition, he stressed that the UGCC was pursuing a path of re-Byzantization in the 1990s, which was an expression of negative attitudes to certain practices from the Latin tradition such as the veneration of the Eucharist, the devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus, praying the rosary, and performing the Stations of the Cross. According to Sabov, “These devotions convey God’s blessings, which were empowering in times of persecution and atheism,” (3-4) and should not be abandoned now. He saw them as markers of Catholicism, distinguishing Catholics from Orthodox believers at a deeply spiritual level, and explained that not even Orthodox priests could eradicate them in former Greek Catholic parishes. He concluded by saying that “the priests and parishioners of the Mukachevo Eparchy have their own rich historical heritage and their own experience of the struggle with Orthodoxy during the underground period and after legalization, and they see their future as being best served by maintaining close links with and direct subordination to the Holy See” (Sabov 1994: 5).

In response, Atanasii Pekar called Sabov’s claims “stereotypical and discredited Hungarian approaches to history that have no scholarly value” (1994: 1). He said that the links between the Kyiv Ecclesiastical Province⁴⁷ and Transcarpathia can be traced to the very idea of union with the Catholic Church, with the impulse for union with the Vatican coming to Transcarpathia from Galicia. He pointed out that the lack of unification between the two parts of the Greek Catholic Church of the Habsburg Empire, and later Austria-Hungary, was not a matter of a lack of willingness on the part of the Transcarpathians, but an effect of Hungarian politics. He asked, “Now that there is no Hungarian hegemony, what is stopping us from uniting with the L’viv Ecclesiastical Province of the same rite?” (Pekar 1994: 2) He added that the presence of some local devotions and traditions could not be interpreted as differences in liturgical tradition. The local differences had no relation to administrative divisions and hierarchies since, if they had, each Catholic region

⁴⁷ Pekar pointed out that the L’viv Ecclesiastical Province was not established until 1807, so the name Kyiv Ecclesiastical Province should be used to refer to earlier periods. In this way he accused Sabov of historical ignorance.

or even each village could claim administrative separation. He also said that, like Uzhhorod, L'viv could be viewed as part of Central Europe, at the crossroads of East and West. With regard to the parish councils' demands for subordination to the L'viv Ecclesiastical Province, Pekar noted that there was in fact considerable pressure from eparchial authorities not to sign such petitions. In his opinion, without such pressure, the number of parishes expressing a wish to unite with the UGCC would have been even greater. With regard to Latin devotions, he said that every UGCC parishioner was free to take part in them, including those listed by Sabov. Moreover, he added, many of these forms of devotion had actually come to Transcarpathia from Galicia and flourished there. In conclusion, Pekar wrote that Sabov's booklet was full of errors, mix-ups, and outright lies. He concluded his letter with the following words:

The Ukrainian Greek Catholics of the Mukachevo Eparchy, living in their own free country, have every right to demand what is due them according to the Holy See and Canonical Law. They want nothing other than to be treated equally with Rusyns and Magyars.⁴⁸ If the eparchial authorities have the right to pursue "Rusyn" propaganda and take "Rusyn" positions, then Ukrainian Greek Catholics, in their own independent state, have every right to stand by their own national positions and to pursue Ukrainian propaganda. That is only fair. (Pekar 1994: 8)

Note the fact that Pekar uses inverted commas for the word "Rusyns," but not for the term "Ukrainians." In this way he acknowledges the presence of people who identify themselves as Rusyns, but simultaneously questions the legitimacy of their self-identification.

Some among those whom Pekar calls "Ukrainian Greek Catholics of Transcarpathia" took his advice seriously and have repeatedly attempted, and continue to attempt, to reassert Ukrainian national aspirations with regard to Transcarpathia and its Greek Catholic Church. One crucial moment in this struggle was the retirement of Ivan Semedii in 2003 (who subsequently died in December 2008). The Vatican appointed Milan Šašik to succeed him, at first as an apostolic administrator and, since 2010, as the official head of the eparchy.

⁴⁸ He uses the term *madziary*, which carries negative connotations, rather than the more politically correct *vengry*.

It is difficult to determine the exact motives behind his appointment without delving into considerations and negotiations that most probably have not left much of a trace in the documentation. Milan Šašík is a Slovak who worked in the apostolic nunciature in Ukraine from 1992 to 1998, and was a parish priest in Transcarpathia from 2000 to 2002. At the time, quite a few Slovak priests were “on temporary loan” to the MGCE from the Prešov Eparchy and Košice Exarchate. He was initially trained as a Roman Catholic, but later retrained for the Eastern Rite to facilitate his work in Ukraine. I suppose that the Vatican wanted to bring an outsider to the MGCE, whose task it would be to calm down the internal friction. However, a Slovak leader was not viewed as a genuine outsider by adherents to the Ukrainian option, as the Slovak eparchies of Prešov and Košice were once parts of the Mukachevo Eparchy. The designation of the Slovak bishop was perceived by some as a continuation of the policy of dividing Transcarpathia from the rest of Greek Catholic Ukraine. However, Bishop Šašík proved to be a skilled negotiator, and approached the proponents of the Ukrainian option with more understanding and diplomacy than had his predecessor. This was also clearly visible in his negotiations over the Dzhublyk site. He also most recently returned to the plans outlined by the Vatican at the beginning of the 1990s, which considered granting the MGCE the status of metropolis (*mitropolia*). Some see such a move as possibly facilitating closer connections between Uzhhorod and L'viv–Kyiv. Recently, the MGCE was indeed divided into three vicariates, which would be the first step toward the establishment of a Transcarpathian ecclesiastical province, but the nature of relations between Kyiv and the church unit that will presumably come into being within the few next years, remains unclear or has at least not yet been made public.

However, even such transformations that might lead to closer future links between the UGCC and the MGCE do not fully satisfy the Ukrainian priests and laity, who view any kind of separation between the MGCE and the UGCC as tantamount to state treason. According to some of my interlocutors, the very existence of a separate church administration in Transcarpathia can be seen as one of the many political attempts to divide the newly unified country in order to threaten its independence, with the most frequently suspected instigator of such efforts being the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB).

Liturgical practice

Discussions over the administrative belonging of the MGCE do not, however, always capture the attention of average parishioners. For them, the most important question directly related to the issue of national identity is that of liturgical language, which is a matter of discussion both in villages and at eparchial headquarters. In 2011, I participated in a conference organized by the Greek Catholic seminary in Uzhhorod and devoted to the life and work of Bishop Theodore Romzha, the most prominent priest-martyr of the Mukachevo Eparchy. Although the question of liturgical language was not the main topic of this conference, it remained a prominent subject throughout. At present, various patterns of liturgical language use can be found in Transcarpathian Greek Catholic parishes, resulting mostly from negotiations between parish priests of various convictions and diverse factions of local parishioners. While in some parishes, liturgies are all celebrated in Church Slavonic, others use Ukrainian, while yet others have both Ukrainian and Church Slavonic services at different times. There are even parishes in which the priest speaks Ukrainian and the people answer in Church Slavonic, or where the vespers are celebrated in Church Slavonic and the Divine Liturgy in Ukrainian. When the issue of liturgical language was addressed by my interlocutors during formal interviews, it was most often presented as a mere matter of familiarity, intelligibility, and custom. The first reaction of those who preferred Church Slavonic was that they were simply used to praying in that language; the first reaction of those people who preferred Ukrainian was to describe the Ukrainian liturgy as being more intelligible, especially for the younger generation. Still, when the matter was brought up during a presentation by one of the pro-Ukrainian priests at the otherwise calm and friendly conference dedicated to Theodore Romzha, the emotions of many of the participants ran high. The fierce discussions ended with the rector of the seminary declaring with a raised voice that he would never pray in Ukrainian because it was not what he was taught by his mother at home. To this a member of the audience retorted, almost shouting, that the rector could think whatever he wanted, but there would come a day when everyone would pray in Ukrainian because they were now in the independent Ukrainian state. The commotion lasted for some time and the organizers had to muster a great deal of diplomatic skill to convince both sides to calm down and allow the next speaker to present her work.

Officially, one can pray in any language one wishes in the eparchy, and the priests are obliged to satisfy the needs of their parishioners with regard to liturgical language. In more urban parishes, where several divine liturgies are conducted each Sunday, liturgies are usually conducted in both Church Slavonic and Ukrainian at various times, which does not, however, always prevent conflicts from arising. In the town of Irshava, for example, one such conflict concerned the times that liturgies were held in each language. The parishioners told me that the Ukrainian liturgies used to be scheduled at very inconvenient times, so that only the most committed Ukrainians would attend, with practically no chance of increasing attendance. There is one type of religious center, however, where the Ukrainian language is always dominant: the Basilian monasteries of Transcarpathia, where liturgies are celebrated only in Ukrainian. The Basilian brothers, furthermore, follow a particular type of church singing that is different from melodies encountered in Transcarpathia, but identical or close to those used in the Basilian monasteries of Galicia. They are known in Transcarpathia as “Galician melodies” (*Halitsky napivny*) but, according to the head of the new Basilian monastery in Mukachevo, people in Galicia learned these melodies from the Basilian monks and not the other way around, explaining that the monks had brought them there from the territories of present-day Lithuania and Belarus, where Basilian monasteries were particularly strong immediately following the Union of Brest. The monastery head, therefore, presents the monks as protectors of Basilian and not of Galician traditions.⁴⁹ This kind of argument can be seen as a part of the subtle negotiations that Basilian brothers have been leading with the present head of the eparchy: the Order of St. Basil the Great, as an independent structure within the Catholic Church, serves to promote a Ukrainian national identification while presenting it as being a part of Basilian tradition.

Basilian monks are not, as a rule, educated in Transcarpathia, but in a seminary in Galicia. Some also train for several years in Poland, where there are major Basilian centers in Warsaw and Przemyśl. As mentioned above, the Basilian monks are known for their role in Ukrainian nation-building processes and for their commitment to the Ukrainian national cause. In contemporary Transcarpathia, Basilian monasteries continue to serve as centers of Ukrainian-ness. When people speak of introducing or supporting “Basilian traditions,” one can be sure that those traditions will be carried out in the Ukrainian

⁴⁹ Personal communication, May 18, 2011.

language, with Galician melodies, and according to the Kyiv time zone, one of the most apparent signs of the Basilian brothers' commitment to Ukraine. The liturgies, meetings, and devotions in the Basilian monasteries are always posted according to Kyiv time, while the clocks in parishioner homes and many parish churches in Transcarpathia are set to Central European Time (CET), just as in Budapest, Vienna, and Prague. Again, this is often argued by both parties to be a matter of convenience. The argument for Kyiv time is that it is used by all state establishments and it is therefore only practical to set private and religious clocks according to Kyiv time as well. The followers of CET say that it corresponds more closely with the solar day and is therefore more "natural" and practical for Transcarpathians, especially those living in small villages.⁵⁰ However, for the small groups of identity-conscious Ukrainians and Transcarpathians (or Rusyns), the choice of time zone serves as an important identity marker.⁵¹

Another question that also directly influences life in the parishes, although it might be not that frequently discussed, is the issue of the education and background of priests. The educational path of a given priest influences the way in which he approaches his duties as a religious specialist. Apart from the practical issues of the kinds of devotions differently educated priests support, their language customs, and the particular types of religiosity that they promote, their education and background also serve as markers of identity and political views. I interviewed all the parish priests of the Irshava Region, as well as all but one of the auxiliary and emeritus priests. Apart from one Greek Catholic monk who also serves as a parish priest and, who is a Russian converted from Orthodoxy, all of the parish priests were born in Transcarpathia, although their educational paths are quite diverse. In 2001–2002, Danyl Bendas published a series of articles in *Blahovistnik*, the eparchial journal, entitled "Legal and Illegal

⁵⁰ Actually, the issue of time also surfaces in other contexts in Transcarpathia and is often used as a marker of identity clothed as a matter of practicality. In the village of Bilki, for example, there is also a so-called church time, used only in the Orthodox parish, following CET in summer and GMT in winter (with no shift to daylight savings). The Orthodox parish priest also told me that this is the "natural" time for him, in accordance with the sun.

⁵¹ For example, I often received annoyed answers when arranging the time of appointment with interviewees known for their strong positions on the national question. If I asked, "According to which time should we meet"? I would get such answers as, "Why should we meet according to Central European Time, if Kyiv is our capital?" or, "This is Central Europe, so we have the same time as you [Poles]."

Education of Priests in the Mukachevo Eparchy,” which presented the period from before the union to the beginning of the twenty-first century. As mentioned above, several strategies for priest preparation and ordination were simultaneously undertaken in the underground MGCE and continued after its relegalization. The seminary in Uzhhorod was reopened in 1991 and became the main source of clergymen for the eparchy. However, in the 1990s, the individual preparation of priests continued because the demand for priests was so high that it could not be met by standard educational procedures. Elemir Ortutai and Iosif Holovach continued to prepare priests individually, as did Bishop Marhitych. However, according to Bendas, while the former two did this with the support and approval of the head of the eparchy, Marhitych educated and consecrated priests without such permission, that is, as Bendas interpreted it, illegally. The supporters of Marhitych with whom I talked, however, pointed out that in 1991 Marhitych was designated by the Vatican as an auxiliary bishop in the MGCE with a special prerogative for the pastoral care of the Ukrainian population of Transcarpathia. Taking into account a perceived anti-Ukrainian position on the part of the eparchial center and the problems that faced the Ukrainian candidates in the seminary, Bishop Marhitych therefore had, in their opinion, every right to continue educating and ordaining priests among those young people who would otherwise be denied the priesthood by the eparchial authorities. Marhitych not only prepared priests individually, but more importantly, he managed to secure for them places in Galician seminaries in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk. Some of them would in fact return to the MGCE and receive their ordination for the eparchy despite these initial problems.

In the meantime, an even greater diversity of paths toward priesthood for future Transcarpathian clergy exists. Elemir Ortutai has undertaken the initial preparations of young men to continue their studies in Nyíregyháza, Vác, and Veszprém in Hungary. Some students have also been sent to Rome, most often to the Collegium Russicum. Still others have studied in the United States and in Eichstätt, Germany. Basilian monks have been trained in a Galician seminary and in Poland. My interviews have shown that seminary training is important in at least two ways. It has a significant influence on the understanding of the role of a parish priest, an issue to which I return in Chapter 4. In the context of the current chapter, however, the most important factor is the view that the method of education corresponds directly to the political positions taken by priests with regard to UGCC-MGCE relations. While this is not true in all cases

(for example, I met at least one priest educated underground by Marhitych who is not a follower of the Ukrainian faction), many of my interlocutors insisted that the priests educated in Galicia pick up Galician traditions and sometimes fail to understand the specific needs of their parishioners, despite the fact that they were born in Transcarpathia themselves.

The question of relations between Ukraine and Transcarpathia and diverse approaches to the character of the connections that link or should link this region with the rest of Ukraine surface in many aspects of religious life within the MGCE and at various levels, from parish councils to the bishop's seat in Uzhhorod. The events that can be observed at Dzhublyk, including the messages received from the Virgin Mary, also clearly speak to these same issues.

The Virgin Mary at Dzhublyk and the Ukrainian Question

I will tell you just one thing: It was Sunday, the Divine Liturgy, there were 10,000 people there, if not more. The whole forest was full of people. It was shortly after the [first] apparition. I went there directly from my own parish church, just after our Divine Liturgy had finished, it was around two or three o'clock in the afternoon. I brought everything from my church: the Gospels, gonfalons, everything that was needed. I was reading the Gospels and then he, this....⁵² You know, it was public, so I can tell you that. And then they snatched the Gospels from my hands and he told me that the Virgin Mary had just said that she only understands Ukrainian!⁵³ Where are we headed? This is just pure nationalism. The Galician people have been always been nationalistic, and they still are. Nothing is sacred to them except nationalism. They have the Ukrainian coat of arms in their churches. I have nothing against Ukraine. I am Ukrainian. Still, one should not confuse issues that should be separate. Otherwise, it is all just politics.

⁵² The omitted fragment contains a side commentary questioning the intentions and moral integrity of one of the priests involved with Dzhublyk. I decided to remove this fragment (and many similar quotes throughout my work) because it contains serious accusations that can neither be confirmed nor rejected on the basis of my knowledge. However, I also decided to insert this footnote to point out the graveness of the accusations that surround Dzhublyk and the deep divisions related to its development.

⁵³ The interviewee was reading the divine liturgy, including the Gospels, in Church Slavonic. He continues to do so in his parish up to the present day.

This is a quote from an interview with a priest, who, because of the proximity of his parish, was present at the Dzhublyk apparition site from the very beginning, but who stopped going there after he became convinced that Dzhublyk was a case of mystification with a clear nationalistic message. I hope that a careful reader of my work will understand that I do not wish to reduce Dzhublyk to its political and national message. Whether pilgrims or locals, and whether negatively or positively disposed toward the site, Dzhublyk is for many also about other, very diverse, and sometimes even contradictory issues: the presence of the sacred; the freshness of new patterns of prayer; feelings of unity; the individualization of religious worship; hunger for power and material gain; schism; and credulity. However, the clear message given by the Virgin Mary, as well as subsequent events and the materiality of Dzhublyk, clearly show that this apparition is also a commentary on the identity of Transcarpathians, the integrity of the Ukrainian state, and divisions within the Greek Catholic Church.

The first Divine Liturgy was celebrated at Dzhublyk by Bishop Marhitych on August 31, 2002. Within a few days after the first apparition, the Virgin Mary requested through the girls who had the visions that the church authorities be informed of the apparitions and invited to pray at the apparition site. Father Petro asked the girls whom exactly the Virgin Mary would like to have informed. She answered through the visionaries that it was to be the elderly Bishop Marhitych. The bishop was therefore invited and brought to the apparition site from his home village. Upon arrival, he immediately invited the girls for an interview in a small van parked at the site, and asked them a number of questions to be passed on to the Virgin Mary. According to the leaflets distributed at the site, as well as the accounts of many present at Dzhublyk from the beginning of these events, the quality of the answers convinced Bishop Marhitych that the apparition could well be of divine origin. I was repeatedly told that the last question he asked the girls concerned the divine sign confirming the truthfulness of the apparitions. According to the girls, the proof lay in the fact that people would gather there to pray without being told about the site, without being invited to come, and without any publicity campaign. The bishop then looked toward the paths leading to the small spring and saw groups of people approaching Dzhublyk from all directions. He thus agreed to conduct the first Divine Liturgy at Dzhublyk. The situation described above, in which the Virgin Mary purportedly

requested a liturgy in Ukrainian, most probably occurred the following day, on September 1, 2002.

Marhitych was the first, and for some time, the only bishop to visit the apparition site. On November 28, 2002, he also headed a group that included the visionaries, their parents, and Atanasii Tsyipesh on a pilgrimage to Rome with the hope of introducing the Dzhublyk case to the Pope. Although they were only able to take part in a general audience, Marhitych managed to introduce the case briefly to John Paul II, who, as the site's managers claim, apparently promised that a Vatican commission would be sent to the apparition site (Tsyipesh 2002–2003b: 22–23). A few months later, Father Atanasii, Father Petro, and the elderly Bishop Marhitych became involved in a dispute, due to which Atanasii Tsyipesh came to be the sole manager of the site and the supervisor of the only remaining active visionary. Father Petro and his daughter (one of the two visionaries), as well as Bishop Marhitych, who died soon thereafter in September 2003, stopped visiting the site. It is not clear what the bishop's attitude toward Dzhublyk was in the final months of his life. Some of my interlocutors claimed that he ultimately denounced the apparitions as the work of the Devil; others claimed that he stopped coming because of the "human factor" (*liudskyi faktor*) and all the disputes among the initial organizers of the site, while still regarding the initial apparitional events as being of supernatural origin; yet others interpreted his absence as the result of his advanced age and poor health. The question of his support for the site has remained an important matter even after his death, both for the supporters and critics of the site. As a leading figure of the Ukrainian faction within the MGCE, Marhitych was respected and admired even by his political opponents for his fearless and far-reaching activity as an underground priest, and viewed as the embodiment of the image of a devoted underground priest and an exemplar of strong moral qualities. As a symbol of the Ukrainian struggle for Transcarpathia as well, especially within the Greek Catholic Church, Marhitych also merged his widely positive image as a suffering and devoted underground priest with a particular political cause. Physical suffering, endurance, and heightened emotionality and sensitivity are important aspects of the social image of underground Greek Catholic priests. As a symbol, the "underground priest" encompasses a strong sensory pole that energizes ideological aspects (Turner 1967). The presence of a strong, widely accepted, and well-developed sensory pole within even the most

complex of symbols results in a greater acceptance of ideological messages linked to a particular symbolic figure. In this sense, the symbolic figure of Ivan Marhitych is structurally similar to the symbolic figure of the Virgin Mary, by representing such experiences and values as love, devotion, and peace. This is the constant interplay between very fundamental human desires and specific instrumentalizations that makes the Virgin Mary a successful and important messenger of particular political ideas. Moreover, the Virgin Mary's messages at Dzhublyk also endorsed the particular linkage between Ukrainian patriotism and underground religious struggles that are epitomized in the life and person of Ivan Marhitych. The messages that accompanied the apparitions from the very beginning referred both to the martyrdom of the Greek Catholic Church and to the question of Ukrainian unity.

The Virgin Mary has not been the only figure to appear to the visionaries. Over time, in fact, the site became known as an apparition site of the Holy Family and other holy figures. While the Virgin Mary has remained the most important focus of devotion for pilgrims, the number of holy figures to speak through the visionaries has unquestionably broadened over time. In a booklet sold at the site, for example, we find a reference to an apparition of St. Andrew that also took place shortly after the initial events:

The next day was the Feast of All Saints of the Ukrainian Nation. After morning mass, she [Olenka] said that she saw, next to the Mother of God and two of the main apostles [Peter and Paul], one person she had not seen before. The Mother of God told her that this was the apostle Andrew. Must this be significant for our Ukrainian land that she saw the apostle Andrew that very day? We know from the legends that are alive among our people that this was Andrew Protokletos, who had walked upon Ukrainian land and had blessed the mountains upon which Kyiv was later built. In truth, we are convinced, again and again, that the Holy Family comes not for some special region of Ukraine, but for the entire nation, for all of Ukrainian society and beyond. It is not surprising that the movements of the so-called Rusyns or other Transcarpathian minorities have accused Dzhublyk of Ukrainian nationalism. Serving God and nation have nothing to do with each other in this case. (Tsyipesh 2002–2003b: 85–86)

In this passage, Atanasii Tsyipesh acknowledges the significance of the apparitions for Ukraine and his understanding of the position of the Rusyn

activists who treat the Dzhublyk apparition as being pro-Ukrainian, while at the same time refuting their accusations of nationalism. He is aware that the “political messages” of the Virgin Mary cannot be welcomed by the present authorities of the *sui iuris* eparchy, as the visions seem to support the pro-Ukrainian option.

The Carpatho-Ukraine Autonomous Region has also figured prominently in the visions. On March 14, 2003, Atanasii Tsyipesh and Olenka were passing Krasne Pole, which was the site of a bloody battle between the supporters of Carpatho-Ukraine and Hungarian troops on March 15, 1939. The visionary saw the field covered with crosses, and “at that moment Father Atanasii understood that the child was seeing something unusual. He concluded that even today the *Sich* fighters were commemorated there, at the place where they sacrificed their lives” (Tsyipesh 2006). Since 2009, the young people who come to Dzhublyk for the annual youth gathering that starts on August 24, the Ukrainian Independence Day, travel together to Krasne Pole to commemorate the fighters who died in defense of Carpatho-Ukraine. On the Dzhublyk website, Brother Theodore, one of the monks of the newly established monastic order at Dzhublyk, explains that it is important to commemorate those who were rarely remembered as the fighters for an independent Ukraine.⁵⁴ He also describes his trip to Krasne Pole on that day with members of the local Children of the Holy Family youth organization. Brother Theodore explained that Transcarpathia was not an overtly patriotic land, especially in comparison to the L'viv or Ivano-Frankiv'sk regions. And for him it was a positively surprising and moving moment when he asked the young people on the bus to sing a few patriotic or religious songs. The children chose to sing the Ukrainian National Anthem—with their hands on their hearts. Brother Theodore followed the song by saying, “Glory to Ukraine!” And the children replied, “Glory to the heroes!” For him, this was a very moving moment. On the way back from Krasne Pole to Dzhublyk, they again joined in songs that showed the “patriotic, Ukrainian spirit of our Transcarpathian children. We know that there were some powers, the Hungarian nationalists for example, who tried to prove that we are not Ukrainians but someone else....But the *Sich* fighters died proving that this is indeed Carpatho-Ukraine, which was united with the whole Ukrainian land, and that our mother tongue is the Ukrainian language.” He finished by saying that the annual celebration at Krasne Pole

⁵⁴ See <http://djublyk.at.ua/index/0-7> (accessed June 12, 2012).

would be a tribute to those youngsters who died there and proof that their ideas on the unity of Transcarpathia with Ukraine were still alive in the region in the twenty-first century.

There are many other examples of Ukrainian patriotism in Dzhublyk. Let us remember that Father Atanasii was, until his transfer to Dzhublyk, the head of an important Basilian monastery in Transcarpathia. While there are indeed lessons in patriotism to be had for young people at the site, probably the most important way in which Dzhublyk helps to unite Transcarpathia with the rest of Ukraine on the other side of the Carpathian Mountains can be seen in the active participation in the site's events by supporters from the L'viv, Ivano-Frankivs'k, and Ternopil' regions.

I wrote above that when Bishop Marhitych asked the girls for definitive proof of the apparitions' divine origin, he was told that the proof was in fact the people who were coming to Dzhublyk in large numbers without being invited. During the very first days after the initial apparition, the people coming were from the surrounding villages. But only a week would pass before people from the other side of the Carpathian Mountains would begin to arrive as well. Everyone involved seems to be in agreement that without the devoted and extensive support that Dzhublyk had received from the pilgrims from Galicia, the site would have had real difficulty surviving, especially when one takes into account the initial strict rejection of Bishop Semedii and the events of spring 2003 (described in Chapter 5).

The most spectacular material sign of the significance of Dzhublyk for Ukrainian unity and the links between Dzhublyk and Galicia in particular is, however, the 300-kilometer-long Stations of the Cross route built across the Carpathian Mountains, linking Dzhublyk with L'viv (figure 3.2). Building the Stations of the Cross was initiated by a small group of people from Galicia, among them Oleksii and Vira Posikira.⁵⁵ I interviewed Oleksii and Vira in L'viv in 2011. The idea to install the Stations of the Cross between Dzhublyk and L'viv occurred to them after visiting the site in June 2003. According to Oleksii, the main initiator was Vitalii Sobolevskii, the prime mover of a number of other religiously inspired projects. Apparently it was he who came up with the idea that the High Castle in L'viv, where the Virgin Mary appeared in 1787, should be linked in this way to Dzhublyk. The Stations were built in

⁵⁵ These are their real names. Oleksii and Vira specifically requested that I mention them by name in my work.



Figure 3.2 The first station of the cross connecting Dzhublyk with L'viv, located at the Castle Hill in L'viv, July 2011

2003, starting from the High Castle in L'viv and continuing along the main L'viv–Mukachevo–Dzhublyk road. Oleksii, a successful and well-connected businessman, managed the organization, fundraising, and negotiations over the land where the crosses were to be placed. According to his estimates, approximately \$1,000 US was necessary to erect each cross, as they were all made from high-quality material (as he works in the construction business, there was to be no compromise). For Oleksii, the still incomplete project has been a crucial step along his own path of spiritual development from Communist and atheist to devoted believer. As he himself has said, it was also important as a sign of unity between the two Greek Catholic churches in Ukraine, and as a powerful tool for potential conversions that, he hopes, will

result from walking or, more often, driving past the Stations of the Cross. Vira and Oleksii have led pilgrimages that stop at each of the Stations to pray on their way to Dzhublyk, but their pilgrimage groups are not the only ones that visit the Stations. In fact, I was told that practically all organized pilgrimages to Dzhublyk from L'viv stop at the Stations. Stepan, a Galician pilgrimage organizer currently living in Mukachevo, is especially devoted to the idea of the Stations and even has plans to enrich the pilgrims' religious experience there with sculptures of the Passion scenes and sound files of prayers and music. He also runs two Internet sites—one devoted to the apparition at Dzhublyk⁵⁶ and one to the Stations of the Cross,⁵⁷ and, perhaps even more interestingly, envisions expanding the Stations of the Cross to other regions of Ukraine. There would then be Stations of the Cross beginning in other Ukrainian towns and meeting up with the main L'viv–Dzhublyk route at some point. One route from Ternopil' might, for example, join the main line in Stryi. The Stations of the Cross could then reach the eastern part of Ukraine as well and, should this dream come true, perhaps even cross state boundaries, with routes leading to Dzhublyk from Poland or Slovakia.

At the moment, however, while the existing Stations of the Cross are indeed currently being improved, there is, according to Oleksii and Vira, little hope that extensions to other Ukrainian cities will be built. As Oleksii explained, "We do plan to build Stations of the Cross from L'viv to Kyiv as well, and then from Kyiv via Uman toward Odessa and Donetsk to unite Ukraine. Now, however, with the change of people in power, the project has come to a halt. Under Yanukovych, all the important people who had already actually given their permission and blessed the project, so to speak, and organized it were removed from their posts. No one would now dare to do this. Maybe we will at least manage to extend the Stations of the Cross to Kyiv, but any further than that—not a chance" (personal communication 2011).

Those ideas should be seen as a part of a broader complex of initiatives that use the symbol of the cross as a marker of unification: first of Ukraine, then of Europe, and then, maybe, of the whole Christian world. As Oleksii and Vira told me, there are now several separately managed initiatives along these lines. The three most important are: the Stations of the Cross between L'viv and Dzhublyk and their possible extensions to other cities; the establishment of

⁵⁶ See <http://dzublyk.at.ua/> (accessed March 23, 2015).

⁵⁷ See <http://golgotha.at.ua/> (accessed March 23, 2015).

crosses in the city centers of L'viv, Kyiv, and Donetsk, thus uniting Ukraine; and the peregrinations of the so-called Thanking Cross through Ukraine and later throughout the world. These initiatives are all connected through the organizers and have taken inspiration from each other. In a 17 November 2005 interview, Oleksii told a journalist with the newspaper *Ukraina i Chas* (*Ukraine and Time*):

"A day before the presidential election we received a phone call from Dzhublyk, (a village in L'viv region [*sic*], where the Mother of God has appeared to two girls—A.P.⁵⁸), saying that the Virgin Mary had asked for the placement of a cross in the center of L'viv"—explained a member of the Thanking Cross Society, Oleksii Posikira—"and from there a thankful pilgrimage of the cross through Ukraine and the world will begin. And before the second round of the parliamentary election, the Mother of God asked that, in order to prevent bloodshed, we should also put up crosses in Kyiv and Donetsk, thereby uniting Ukraine."

The article subsequently described the struggles with the L'viv city authorities, who wanted to remove the cross because it was put up without any of the necessary permits. The authorities were not successful in removing it in the end, despite the fact that the cross had not received the support of Lubomir Huzar, the head of the UGCC at that time. The only official letter of support the initiators managed to secure was signed by the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine, Bishop Jaworski. The members of the Thanking Cross Society held vigils next to the cross in L'viv and the police did not dare touch the cross surrounded by people praying. Interestingly, the article ends with another quotation from an interview with Oleksii Posikira in which he says that the initiative is not political but is, rather, a question of morality. This type of argumentation is frequently used in struggles around religious initiatives in Ukraine. If, for outside observers, the initiatives would appear to have very clear political aims, the religious symbolism they use is presented as a clear indication that what is at stake is not politics, but morality. Here, the emic interpretation seems to follow the Durkheimian view that religion is the main way that morality is expressed (Thiele 1996: 55).

The three crosses in L'viv, Donetsk, and Kyiv were erected during the Orange Revolution.⁵⁹ Father Atanasii was himself present in Kyiv during the

⁵⁸ Initials of the journalist.

⁵⁹ The cross in Kyiv was later cut down by a member of the activist group *Femen* in August 2012 in support of the Russian group *Pussy Riot*, members of which were arrested in

Orange Revolution. On the thirteenth of each month, rosary sessions are conducted next to each of the crosses. This is related to the apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Fatima, who appeared to three children in Portugal on the thirteenth of each month between May and October 1917. The Fatima apparitions have particular resonance in former socialist countries, especially among religious dissident circles, as they were interpreted in part as a warning against the evils of Communism and atheism (Bennett 2012: 183; Christian 1999). Those who participated in underground services in Transcarpathia still recall that many underground priests expressed a deep reverence for Fatima and its messages.

The third initiative is the peregrination of the Thanking Cross through the capitals of the world.⁶⁰ The organizers give the day when the crosses in L'viv, Kyiv, and Donetsk were raised as the date of the beginning of the peregrination. While those three crosses were permanently fixed, the idea was born that Ukraine can also be united through a cross traveling from one parish to another. In 2006 the journey of the Thanking Cross through the parishes of Ukraine was organized. While the cross was for the most part welcomed in Catholic parishes, the organizers tried with limited success to convince Orthodox and Protestant communities to accept a visit as well. Dzhublyk was also among the places visited during the journey. The Thanking Cross is now currently on its way through Europe. While the initial idea was to establish a cross similar to those in L'viv, Donetsk, and Kyiv in all of Europe's capital cities, one cross is now being taken from one European city to another, wherever it is welcome. To date, it has been brought to Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Iceland, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Italy. Once the pilgrimage through Europe is complete, the organizers plan to bring the cross to other parts of the world, beginning with Africa and then the Middle East.⁶¹

It is important to note that all these initiatives have been organized by lay believers, with little or no support from the diocesan authorities, especially the Greek Catholic authorities.⁶² The only clergy devoted to participating in these

Moscow after performing a protest song in Christ the Savior Cathedral.

⁶⁰ www.thankingcross.info (accessed September 12, 2013).

⁶¹ www.thankingcross.info (accessed September 13, 2013).

⁶² As indicated above, some formal support was provided by the Roman Catholic authorities.

initiatives have been monks, representatives of various orders that also took part in the blessing of the L'viv–Dzhublyk Stations of the Cross. These include Atanasii Tsyipesh; Iosafat Vorotniak, a Basilian monk who was the head of the Boroniava monastery after Father Atanasii moved to Dzhublyk; Mikhailo Koval, a Redemptorist of the Eastern Rite; and Father Vasyl Voronovski, a Studite monk and one of the most well-known Ukrainian exorcists.⁶³ The monastic orders are independent of diocesan authorities and less visibly involved in the political landscape.

Concluding Remarks

In the abovementioned interview by the Ukrainian Catholic University, Ivan Marhitych said, “It is a pity, but even among the leadership of our eparchy there are people who claim that the Rusyns are not Ukrainians. It is a lie that the Rusyns had nothing in common with Ukrainians historically. Even today, some claim this....Such a view was, for example, presented during talks on the unification of the MGCE with the Kyiv seat....This was an official statement”. Important changes have taken place since 2000. The new head of the MGCE, Milan Šašik, is a skilled diplomat who puts a great deal of effort into stabilizing relations within the eparchy. This can be seen in the changes in the management of Dzhublyk since his appointment. Passions, however, continue to run high, and the question of the national identity of Transcarpathia as expressed in the religious sphere has not yet been resolved.

In their assessment of cognitive approaches to the study of race, ethnicity, and nationalism, Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman, and Peter Stamatov wrote that the main suggestion of such approaches is that “race, ethnicity and nation are not things in the world but ways of seeing the world. They are ways of understanding and identifying oneself, making sense of one’s problems and predicaments, identifying one’s interests, and orienting one’s actions” (2004: 47). According to Brubaker et al., cognitive approaches can demonstrate that the tendency to look at the world in terms of racial, ethnic, and national categories is so persistent and widespread because those categories are internally structured in a way that corresponds with the ways in which our minds work,

⁶³ Iosafat Vorotniak died in 2008 and Vasyl Voronovski in 2010. I interviewed Atanasii Tsyipesh, Iosafat Vorotniak and Mikhailo Koval.

in other words, such categories are “easy to think with.” They also suggested that cognitive approaches can bridge the old and somewhat worn division between primordialists and constructivists in the studies of nationalism, showing that there are cognitive mechanisms that encourage us to think about groups, including national and ethnic groups, as if they were natural kinds, that is, collectives, whose members share some common “essence” (*see, for example*, Gil-White 2001). The task of constructivist-minded researchers is then to show how ethnicity becomes salient in particular contexts, because the fact that ethnicity and nationality are “easy to think with” does not mean that they will always and everywhere be universally active.

This last point is important. If we treat ethnicity and nationality, as Brubaker et al. (2004) suggest, as ways of perceiving, interpreting, and representing the social world, the question remains: How compelling in fact are these categories? It seems that within the contemporary Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia, there are people for whom nationality has become the main way of seeing the social world, as well as people who use other categories as their primary lenses. For those who argue for the Ukrainian identity of Transcarpathia, its population, and its Greek Catholic Church, the social world is divided into national groups, and specific cognitive schemas structure their thinking about them. One is a certain type of person because one is Ukrainian, and one has a right to make certain claims because one is Ukrainian. Ukrainian nationalism is of the ethnic type, which as Greenfeld (2001: 260) writes, is perceived as a biological necessity: “It is believed that one cannot be without nationality, as one cannot be without essential bodily organs; one is born with a particular nationality and one can never lose it. At best (or at worst) one’s national identity can be concealed.” For my pro-Ukrainian interlocutors, this concealment of national identity is judged as treason or at least as morally reprehensible. The situation is complicated by the fact that their opponents do not see nation as the principal category of perceiving the social world. The Ukrainian activists call their opponents *madziarony* or *politycheskie Rusyny*. The first term discursively constructs their opponents as an ethno-national group (Hungarians), which in structural terms would correspond to Ukrainians, thereby framing the ensuing discussions in terms of two national groups fighting for dominance. They can discuss history, culture, national heroes, and the erection of monuments, arguing that Transcarpathia is either Ukrainian or Hungarian. There are, of course, those within Hungary and also probably among Transcarpathian Hungarians who see the issue of Transcarpathia

precisely in such terms.⁶⁴ Still, not all non-Ukrainians in Transcarpathia express support for the Hungarian national cause, so coining the term “political Rusyns” can be seen as a way of lumping a very diverse group of opponents into a single category that fits into the same type of cognitive schema. In this case, however, the “nationality”—Rusyn—is derided as an illegitimate nationality. In this discourse, “political Rusyns” are constructed as a group with political aspirations for the independence or autonomy of Transcarpathia, but without the required legitimacy, as their identity is said to lack the necessary “ethnic” foundation, meaning a significant distinctiveness (from Ukrainians) in terms of history, culture, language, and origin.

However, it seems that the majority of Slavic-speaking Transcarpathians do not easily take on those constructions of the Transcarpathian population in ethno-national terms. They see themselves as citizens of this or that state, but not as members of any titular ethnic nation. For them the state is a resource that should help make their lives better, not further the aims of a national political struggle. As the priest quoted at the beginning of this chapter suggested, national symbolism does not seem to have much resonance in Transcarpathia. The Slavic-speaking opponents of the Ukrainian ethno-national option see themselves neither as Hungarians nor as Rusyns who would love nothing more than to replace monuments of Shevchenko with those of their own national bards.⁶⁵ They are aware that Europe is divided into nation-states, but they see themselves as strategically positioned in between them. As I show in Chapter 5, many people in Transcarpathia see value in what they call unity; this does not, however, have to take on the form of national unity. For the Ukrainians, on the other hand, their focus lies on the unity of the ethno-national state. The Transcarpathian acceptance of Ukraine as their governing state is not seen by Ukrainians as sufficient. For Ukrainians, the ideal is the unity of state, territory, and ethnicity, and the presence of Transcarpathians, who claim to be loyal Ukrainian citizens but refuse to participate in Ukrainian national symbo-

⁶⁴ Recent monuments established by Hungarians in Transcarpathia serve as material expressions of these attitudes and discussions. Statues of the Hungarian *turul*, a bird that plays an important role in Hungarian origin myths, have been erected in the Mukachevo Castle, as well as in some other places in Transcarpathia. In 2008 a monument was erected at the Veretsky Mountain Pass commemorating the crossing of the Carpathians by Hungarian tribes in 895. It has since been vandalized several times.

⁶⁵ Taras Shevchenko was a nineteenth-century poet and artist, who is considered a founding father of Ukrainian national literature. Monuments in his honor can be found in most western Ukrainian towns.

lism, is seen as a threat. Other inhabitants of Transcarpathia—whether Hungarians, Romanians, Slovaks, or Germans—unquestionably fit better into a vision of a world divided into ethno-national groups. For the Transcarpathian Ukrainian nationalists, the biggest cognitive problem is posed not by those few Rusyn activists who actively argue for the existence of a separate Rusyn nation or even for some kind of autonomy. The greatest problems are posed by those who do not want to look at the social world through a national lens. The two parties thus do not seem to be engaged in a conversation with one another, but rather appear to be talking past each other.

We are thus faced with two concrete positions: one clearly sees nationality and ethnicity as objects in the world, and the ideal is a concurrence of nation, ethnicity, and state. Adherents to this position can be said to partake in what Brubaker (2009: 28) calls “methodological groupism,” that is, the tendency to treat various categories of people as if they were internally homogenous and externally bounded groups, or even collective actors with common purposes, and to understand ethnic and racial groups and nations as the basic constituents of social life, as the chief protagonists in social conflicts, and as fundamental units of social analysis. Contemporary Ukrainian nation-building efforts by those Transcarpathians for whom it is not only important to be recognized as Ukrainian citizens, but also as culturally and ethnically Ukrainian, aim to construct Transcarpathians as a regional group within the Ukrainian nation. This is done by highlighting certain features of local history, culture, and language, and downplaying others. What is interesting in the case of Dzhublyk is that direct involvement by the divine has been fused with an array of other nation-building tools: supernatural powers came down to earth to support the construction of national boundaries in a situation of crisis in which the promoters of nation-building came up against potent opposition from within a religious organization.

Vlad Naumescu (2008a), who conducted ethnographic research concerning religious life in the suburbs of L'viv, wrote that although none of the four Eastern Christian churches in Ukraine managed to become *the* Ukrainian national church, each of them actually did in fact aspire to that status. The UGCC was quite successful in establishing itself as a national church in western Ukraine, but with few Greek Catholics living in other parts of the country, the church's campaign went unrecognized beyond western Ukraine (2008a: 63). Naumescu also analyzed efforts on the part of other Eastern churches in Ukraine to claim the status of national church. In Transcarpathia, however, no church organi-

zation has thus far presented itself as a Ukrainian national church. The presence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church is very weak. The pro-Ukrainian aspirations of within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate have not gained traction—one need only enter a church bookstore to see that most of the publications there are in Russian. As for the Transcarpathian Greek Catholic Church, it is probably the only space in a religious context within which the Ukrainian national idea has carved a niche for itself, but that idea clearly does not dominate the organization.

Moreover, the idea of national Ukrainian unity has been framed in moral terms. While identification with Hungary is seen as a threat and a challenge, it is nevertheless recognized as legitimate. Self-identification as Rusyn, on the other hand, is seen as immoral because, in this interpretation, people are motivated to identify themselves as Rusyn not out of a deep sense of conviction, love for their country, or some fundamental characteristic such as culture or language, but out of political opportunism or an interest in material gain. This issue of morality also links the national question to Dzhublyk. In his analysis of visionary experiences in Canada, Edward Berryman (2005a) shows how such a link to morality can be an important discursive strategy establishing belief in a vision. Doubts about the truthfulness of a vision can be presented as an act of rejecting Jesus as a moral teacher, thus turning a non-believer into an immoral person. This principle seems to have been employed in Dzhublyk as well, with a particular twist. The act of rejecting the pro-Ukrainian messages of Dzhublyk has been presented as an act of rejecting the Virgin Mary, hence casting doubt on the person's morality.

In most of the works on apparitions of the Virgin Mary, the assumption has been made that the political instrumentalization present at almost every site, however rapidly and extensively it may occur, nevertheless comes subsequent to the initial visionary experiences. This is clearly described in Jeffrey S. Bennett's book on Fatima, in which he writes that "the apparition cult was not a Jesuit invention. It was the offspring of ordinary women and men who were primarily concerned with the productivity of their smallholdings, the protection and moral cohesion of their families and villages, and the availability of resources to cope with existential crises of various sorts" (2012: 19). He offers an interpretation of how the experiences of the three visionaries came into being and how they subsequently became transformative events in Portuguese history. This is the common, respectful approach adopted in many historical,

sociological, and anthropological studies on apparitions (Blackbourn 1993). In the case of Dzhublyk, however, I could not with the same degree of certainty begin my analysis with the experience of the two little girls from the village of Nyzhnie Bolotne. It is possible that their initial experiences were rapidly employed to pursue a specific ideological agenda; still, it may also well be that the experiences were themselves initiated to promote this agenda and that the girls were explicitly encouraged to have their visions. There are among my interlocutors some, though not many, who lean toward this second interpretation. However, even if Dzhublyk was in fact initiated for a specific political cause, this diminishes neither its meaning for the people involved nor its theoretical significance. Whatever the case may be, its presence had to be dealt with by church authorities, who feared that the straightforward rejection of Dzhublyk could cause a deep internal split in the eparchy. While the national question is important, it is not the only one addressed through the apparitions and events that developed around them.

CHAPTER 4

Authority of the Priests

In Christian usage, the word “church” designates the liturgical assembly, but also the local community or the whole universal community of believers. These three meanings are inseparable.

—Catechism of the Catholic Church 752

The Christian Church is an assembly of those called by Christ, of those who have believed in Him and live by Him. Yet the Church is not merely a society or fellowship of people united by their faith in Christ, it is not just a sum total of individuals. Gathered together, the members of the Church comprise a single body, an indivisible organism.

—Orthodox Catechism⁶⁶

Let all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ follows his Father, and the college of presbyters as the apostles; respect the deacons as you do God’s law. Let no one do anything concerning the Church in separation from the bishop.

—Catechism of the Catholic Church 896, quoting St. Ignatius of Antioch

In subjecting themselves to the bishop, the presbyters are subjecting themselves to Christ in his person....To be out of harmony with the bishop is to break away from the Church. The three-fold hierarchy has to be treated with greatest respect on the part of the faithful: All must respect the deacons as Christ’s commandments and the bishops as Jesus Christ Himself...the

⁶⁶ See the website of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate (<http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/10/1.aspx#32>) (accessed March 23, 2015).

presbyters are to be respected as the assembly of God, as the host of angels. Without them there is no Church.

—Orthodox Catechism⁶⁷

In terms of religious organization, there is a seemingly important difference between the Orthodox and the Catholic ecclesiastical formations.⁶⁸ The Orthodox understanding of the church underlines the unity of spirit while accepting a diversity of administrative organization; in the Catholic understanding, the unity of organization serves as a visible sign of its spiritual oneness. Chris Hann and Hermann Goltz wrote that Orthodox churches “form a *global* structure of *local* churches, as distinct from the ‘globalization’ of a local church, be it West Roman, the Wittenbergian, or the Genevan” (2010: 3). In terms of structure of authority, the difference is seemingly apparent: the highest authority in the Catholic Church is officially the Pope, while in the Orthodox Church, it is the *Sobor*, an assembly of monks, priests, and laity. Still, how significant is this difference at the level of local communities? If there is a difference in the ways in which religious authority is perceived, is it an expression of divergent theological and ecclesiastical concepts, or is it rather a matter of practice, shaped locally in its political, historical, and social aspects? The above quotations from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and a catechism published by the Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate all refer to the three basic understandings of the church: as the community of the faithful; as the mystical Body of Christ; and as a hierarchical organizational structure. The quotations show that neither collegiality (*sobornost*) for Orthodox Christianity nor hierarchical structure for Catholic Christianity can be treated as essential characteristics for them, representing two of the many ways in which Christianity is present in the social world. What we need is a historically grounded analysis of the ways in which the organizational church is actually present in the lives of the faithful.

One of the crucial questions posed in this work concerns the significance of the perception of the Catholic Church as a single centralized, hierarchical, and global organization for the practice of religious life at the local level. This

⁶⁷ See the website of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate (<http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/10/1.aspx#32>) (accessed March 23, 2015).

⁶⁸ I use the terms Catholic and Orthodox here to refer to the names of religious organizations; I am aware that both ecclesiastical structures regard their teachings as both orthodox and catholic.

question is especially significant for the Greek Catholic Church, which is often perceived and perceives itself as occupying a border zone between Eastern and Western Christianity, a church that is Byzantine in terms of its liturgical tradition, but united administratively with the Vatican (Mahieu and Naumescu 2008). However, how much does this administrative subjugation to a center of power located far beyond the borders of any local parish, diocese, or even national church influence the ways in which people understand the relations between the church as an organization, as the Body of Christ, and as a (local) community of believers? I argue that the relationships between these three understandings of the church in everyday terms are structured by immediate circumstances and needs, and that the practical significance of the conciliar (*sobornost'*) nature of Orthodoxy, as often contrasted with the hierarchical nature of Catholicism (Binns 2002: 212ff.), is a matter of historical contingency and is not essential to Orthodox religiosity. At the same time, however, I want to stress that the existence of the Vatican as a source of authority beyond the immediate local context is a powerful factor that is felt at the local community level, shaping the relations between the three understandings of the church.

Large parts of this and the following chapter concern these issues. I look at how the authority of religious specialists is developed among the Greek Catholic priests of the Irshava Deanery, how the concept of the church is understood by them and by laypeople, and how the Dzhublyk apparitions have influenced the understanding of the church as a hierarchical organization, as the people of God, and as the Body of Christ, which I call, for the purpose of this work, the organizational, communal, and mystical dimensions of the church. I argue that in the case of the Orthodox and Catholic churches, the theological differences are less relevant for the lives of respective communities on the ground than are historical and political developments or goals, both those of religious organizations and those of broader social and political formations such as nation-states. On the one hand, the local history and present legal situation of the Catholic and Orthodox churches in Ukraine bring to light many similar problems with regard to religious authority. On the other hand, I argue that the centralized and global character of the Catholic Church is of crucial importance, as it provides its local functionaries with a specific range of tools and techniques, originating beyond the immediate local context, that help them negotiate and shape local religious life. Although the Catholic Church has made repeated calls for a return to the Byzantine traditions, starting at least as early as the time of the Pope Leo XIII's 1894 encyclical *Orientalium Dignitas* and

going through the Second Vatican Council and the promulgation of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches in 1990, the very structure of the Catholic Church and the channels of management, negotiation, and decision making it uses create divergences between the Catholic Church of Byzantine Rite and the Orthodox Church. The most important, however, is that Catholic believers often *perceive* themselves as taking part in the life of the global religious organization. There is no need for there to have been an explicit policy of Latinization to create a deep difference between the Catholic and Orthodox communities; those differences are created as outcomes of the organizational structure of Catholicism and its local perceptions.

I do not, therefore, think that one should look at the differences between the various branches of Christianity, as observed on the ground, through the lens of theology or dogma. We do not have to refer to some normative, essential difference between the Western and Eastern Christian churches to understand everyday religious life. On the contrary, it is necessary to note that the complexities of both Catholic and Orthodox ecclesiologies allow for simultaneous and/or subsequent development of several understandings and strategies concerning the practical life of the respective church. In both ecclesiological traditions, the church can be understood simultaneously as the Body of Christ, a hierarchy, the community of the faithful, the Eucharistic assembly, and the people of God—to offer just a selection of concepts that can be found in ecclesiological writings (cf. Binns 2002; Kearsley 2008; Wenzel 2007). For both Christian traditions, these various understandings of church are interrelated, but can also be decoupled, with important consequences in matters of practical theology and administration. In a 1984 interview with Vittorio Messori, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, gave an example of such a decoupling. He expressed his concern with the tacit disappearance of the “authentically Catholic meaning of the reality ‘Church’” (Messori and Ratzinger 1985: 45). According to him, even some theologians seem to forget that the church is willed into being by God so that its fundamental structures are inviolable: the church is a mystical as well as sociological reality, and the church ultimately resides in Christ. He protested against viewing the church as a human construct and as an exclusively sociological phenomenon. Although he did not generally disapprove of the post-Vatican II insistence on the understanding of the church as the people of God, he said that this use of the term eclipsed the fundamental fact that the church was called into existence by Christ, who willed into being the structure of the visible church, including its hierarchy. His

statement is a defense of church hierarchy in the face of demands for greater lay participation in decision-making processes. As the interview with Ratzinger clearly shows, there is a constant need to refine and redefine the relationships between the three understandings of the Ecclesia, including discussions over the practical shape of religious life.

In Orthodox practical theology, the need to balance the understandings of the church as a hierarchy, a community of believers, and the body of Christ is just as present as in Catholic practical theology, as the above quotations from the Orthodox Catechism, published by the Russian Orthodox Church, indicate. In the introduction to their collective volume on the anthropology of Eastern Christianity, Hann and Goltz (2010: 2) call for more sensitivity to the specificities of the Eastern branch of Christianity and the insights its presence can contribute to the emerging anthropology of Christianity, as well as to a reassessment of the paradigm of East versus West alterity. They suggest that, while shades of difference in theology and divergent forms of ecclesiastical organization both play a role in patterns of economic, social, and political developments, they can only be understood when set in the context of wider institutional changes and power relationships. I agree with regard to issues of theology, as little can be understood about local situations on the basis of such concepts as “Eastern mysticism” or “Western individualism.” While Catholic and Orthodox theologies do differ on important matters, the assumption of a correspondence between religious ideas and beliefs on the one hand, and lived social practices on the other hand, which became the dominant paradigm because of simplistic interpretations of Weber’s works on Protestant ethics (Hann 2012), is not borne out by close ethnographic observation.

There has been recent criticism from a variety of scholars of the view that religious theologies are sources for the development of basic concepts governing people’s everyday lives and decisions. In his 2009 presidential address to the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Mark Chaves (2010) expressed his fundamental doubts about religious congruency, that is, a consistency among religious ideas, attitudes, and behaviors. He says that there is little sociological evidence that the religious ideas one expresses influence one’s behavior and attitudes across the temporal and spatial context, and that one’s declared adherence to a given religious denomination (even if one is an active participant) is equally inconsequential in this respect. Not only can we find people within any religious community with very divergent attitudes toward a wide range of issues, but even the attitudes of a single person are

known to change situationally: even as I can experience a connectedness with my fellow believers during mass, I can honestly experience distrust toward the very same people outside the religious context (Chaves 2010: 4). The term “theological correctness” has been popularized by Justin Barrett in the cognitive studies of religion, meaning that complex theological ideas play an important role only in situations in which one has had enough time to reflect on one’s own process of reasoning and when this process is situated in a religious context. Theologically correct concepts do not play a significant role in other situations, when one does not have time for long deliberation and reflection (Barrett 1999). Chris Hann (2012) reflects on recent contributions to the anthropological study of Eastern Christianity, coming to the conclusion that there is no evidence for the internal states of Eastern Christians being any different from those of other Christians. The particular ways in which Eastern Christianity is practiced are probably more the product of local histories than its drivers. Hann says that “notions of belief and individuality highlighted in the theological discourses of particular strands of one world religion are a poor guide to actual differences in the way persons think and behave, let alone the patterns of world history.”⁶⁹

In line with this trend, I suggest that the specific ways in which Christianity is practiced have more to do with local histories and global patterns of organization than with characteristics of “Orthodoxy” or “Catholicism” as theological ideals. The ways in which the relations between priests and parishioners are shaped in Eastern Catholic (as well as Orthodox) parishes in Transcarpathia are a result of the Soviet legal heritage, the current economic situation, and the way in which the underground church operated in particular areas. On the other hand, however, I think that crucial importance lies in the divergent forms of ecclesiastical organization that directly influence the local politics of religion. In my opinion, it is not the Latinization of devotional practice or even the acceptance of certain theological concepts that makes the Eastern Christian a Catholic Christian, but the recognition of the Vatican’s authority and the practical implications connected to that recognition. On the basis of my ethnographic material I conclude that the conscious acceptance of the Vatican’s supremacy, and especially the leading role of the Pope as the ultimate authority in church matters, have a transformative power that can undermine the unity

⁶⁹ Available at <http://aotcpres.com/articles/personhood-christianity-modernity/> (accessed August 24, 2013).

of the “Orthodox imaginary,” which is brought about by the commonality of ritual practice within divergent organizational church structures (Naumescu 2008). I devote more space to this issue in the next chapter.

Throughout this work, the Dzhublyk apparitions serve as an entry point that provides clues to the questions that are important in the lives of Greek Catholics in Transcarpathia. The visionaries announced that the Virgin Mary came to restore the authority of priests among the people. Yet, even without the clues provided by the apparitions, very early in my research I was struck by the forms that the relations between priests and lay believers took. On the one hand, one could observe the great respect expressed for the priestly calling in general and the willingness to see priests as spiritual and moral guides. On the other hand, priests were treated as providers of specific services who were not expected to actively shape the lives of their local religious communities. Thus, priests were seen as having an elevated position with regard to the people, but they were at the same time treated as if they were in the employ of the people. The priests with whom I talked often noticed this apparent contradiction and tried to deal with it in their everyday practice. They employed a variety of strategies either to legitimize their authority or to carve out a space for themselves in the local religious context that would meet their own expectations regarding the role and position of a clergyman in a community. I present some of their strategies below.

I argue that those particular relations between the church as a local community of believers and the church as a hierarchy represented by bishops and priests were shaped in significant ways during the Soviet era. Detailed ethnographic studies of religion in post-socialist countries suggest that religious life did not merely survive the era, but was in fact deeply transformed in the process (Dragadze 1993; Kaneff 2002; Ssorin-Chaikov 2001). In Chapter 1 I argued that the Soviet period and the experience of socialism did not necessarily diminish the importance of religion in people’s lives, but that it nevertheless profoundly influenced how people perceived and experienced religious practice, religious organizations, and their own place in relation to them. My approach has been inspired by a brief article by Tamara Dragadze (1993), in which she writes about the domestication of religion in the Soviet state. It is her view that the repression of religion resulted in the withdrawal of religious practices from the realm of religious organizations and designated places of worship to the realm of private homes and into the care of a wide range of lay believers. In a situation in which access to religious specialists was limited or dangerous, laypeople took on the

responsibility for the survival and continuation of religious life, organizing and executing many religious rituals that previously had been under the control and supervision of representatives of religious organizations. Some interpret such domestication as the confinement of religious life to the domestic sphere (Hann 2012: 12). My ethnographic material, however, suggests that, at least in some cases, this domestication should not be seen as a limitation or confinement, but in fact as an actual broadening of the scope of religious practice beyond the spheres and personnel controlled by the religious organizations to which it had been previously confined. At least in Transcarpathia, during the Soviet era, religious practices went outside the realm controlled by religious organizations. What is currently most problematic from the point of view of religious organizations is not the revival of just any aspect of religious life, as for most people in this region the existence of a transcendental reality and the need to build some kind of relationship with it are self-evident. Although they cannot be called “never secular” in Tanya Luhrmann’s (2012) sense, as they are very much aware that a non-religious social reality is possible, there is little space for the complete abandonment of religious life in their immediate social surroundings. What remains underdetermined is the exact shape of this religious life, especially in organizational terms. From the point of view of religious organization, the biggest challenge is to secure control over the religious lives of the people. This is not only a question of convincing the people to choose one organization over another. It is also a question of negotiating among all involved parties the relationships between organizational personnel, laypeople, and the diverse and often divergent visions of the church. How exactly those relationships are negotiated also depends on the views and directives of the church hierarchy and their actual implementation by the priests in their particular parishes, as shaped through interaction with the particular religious communities at hand.

The Catholic clergy are rather sparsely represented among the plethora of various religious specialists that have attracted the attention of social anthropologists. They cannot compete in terms of ethnographic popularity with shamans, spirit mediums, or diviners; they are also less frequently the focus of ethnographic attention than evangelical preachers or even Catholic monks. If Catholic priests appear in ethnographies at all, they occupy a place in the background as representatives of the Catholic Church, often juxtaposed with the local communities of laypeople, whose attitudes, lifestyles, and opinions figure in the foreground of ethnographic narratives (Badone 2007; Christian

1972; for an exception, *see* Behar 1990). One can think of several reasons for such a situation. First, despite all the efforts to encourage multi-sited fieldwork, the standard focus or at least the starting point for ethnographic investigation continues to be a single local community. If this happens to be a Catholic community, it usually includes one or two priests and, in more historically focused accounts, a succession of priests serving in the particular village. The focus here is on local history, in which priests play a role as voices and agents of the church as an organization or of its different regimes (Bax 1991a,b). Second, as Stoczkowski (2008: 349) writes, anthropologists prefer to study “the oppressed rather than the oppressor, the poor rather than the rich, the dominated classes rather than the dominant classes, with a particular taste for the good causes already recognized as such by the newspapers and the common sense.” Priests are in turn perceived as representatives of the Catholic Church, which is viewed as a dominant, hierarchical, and powerful organization, thus remaining outside the scope of an anthropological attention that gives priority to marginal or subversive voices. And third, it is often assumed, and in many cases probably rightly so, that it is not easy to conduct research focused on the Catholic clergy, as the Catholic Church does not like to be scrutinized by independent researchers. As I show throughout this book, for many priests the highest good is that of the church, understood as the conflation of the mystical body of Christ and the church hierarchy, so that independent research often arouses suspicions and is seen as potentially dangerous.

Priests and their Relations with the Laity in Transcarpathia

As explained in the Introduction, I began my research by conducting fieldwork in Slovakia with the aim of comparing the two sides of Ukraine-Slovak border, which, for centuries, had belonged to the same state and to Greek Catholic Church administrations. This project, however, had to be postponed because the research in both countries required more time than expected, although for different reasons in each case: in Slovakia, it was difficult even to assess the complexity of the situation because of the relative inaccessibility of the people and, in particular, the church hierarchy, a situation one might have hoped to overcome with time; in Ukraine, by contrast, the relative openness and accessibility encountered at various levels of the country’s religious community provided a wealth of information and opportunities that required

considerable attention and research time. I have, in fact, explored some of the reasons for these differences in other publications (Halemba 2007, 2008a, 2008b). These initial experiences in conducting research on both sides of the Ukraine–Slovak border drove home the fact that the shape, self-image, ideology, and management strategies of the Catholic Church cannot be taken for granted. An important part of the ideology of the Catholic Church is that it is one, undivided, and guided by common sources both immanent (the Pope) and transcendent (the Holy Trinity). However, the way in which the organization is managed in particular locations depends not only on common Vatican guidelines, but also on particular histories and social realities. As I could not conduct a full-fledged comparison at that stage, I decided to devote a large part of my fieldwork to investigating the workings of the church on the ground in Transcarpathian Ukraine.

Because of the initial comparative nature of my project, on my very first trip to Ukraine, I was accompanied by a Slovak priest who had served there previously on a temporary contract. He offered to help me cross the border, wanting to make sure that I would not be harassed by the border guards and that I arrived safely in Uzhhorod. Since then, I have crossed the Ukraine–Slovak border many times and have never experienced any substantial problems, but at the time I accepted his offer gratefully as it included not only help at the border but also contacts in Uzhhorod, where I knew no one at the time. He remarked jokingly that we would cross the border “on the wings of the Holy Spirit,” and so we did as, with a man in priestly clothing sitting in the front, my car was admitted into Ukraine without the hours of queuing and meticulous searching that was usual at the time when crossing the border at Uzhhorod. One of my first experiences in Transcarpathian Ukraine was, therefore, the experience of authority legitimated by the charisma of the priestly office. The complexity of the issue of priestly authority and the fact that the charisma of the office does not always legitimate authority would only gradually become clear to me in the course of my following months and years of research.

The Slovak priest subsequently introduced me to his Ukrainian colleagues; for this reason, my first interviews in Ukraine were conducted with members of the clergy. Although I later made an effort to spend more time and talk more with lay believers, I did in fact become fascinated, early on in my fieldwork, with the personalities, networks, and attitudes of the priests. While I spent most of my time with laypeople during my subsequent research trips in 2007 and 2008, in 2011 I returned to conducting a great deal of research among priests,

and with each interview, common meal, and pilgrimage I became more fascinated with their personalities and the diversity of their approaches to religious life. I also spent some very valuable time at the seminary in Uzhhorod, where I was able to participate in common meals, relax in the teachers' room, and listen on the students' oral exams. Taking into account my previous experience of research in Slovakia, I deeply appreciated the relative openness of the priests in Ukraine, who shared their thoughts with me, even those that were quite critical of the politics of the church hierarchy. I perceived their openness and the relative ease I felt when conducting research among them to be an important opportunity not to be missed. I would subsequently conduct interviews with all the parish priests of the Irshava Deanery, with all but one of the auxiliary priests, numerous Basilian monks, members of the Uzhhorod Eparchial Center, and a number of influential clergymen in Mukachevo. I also talked to a number of Orthodox priests. At the very beginning of my research in 2006, moreover, I interviewed the head of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy, Bishop Milan Šašík, whom I first met in Slovakia when he was visiting a pilgrimage site in Klokočov, which used to be an important site belonging to the MGCE. Our meeting was organized by the same priest who later helped me at the border crossing, and it was very informal and friendly. Unfortunately, I could not interview the bishop a second time—when I tried to make an appointment for a second interview in 2011, I was advised to talk to his secretary and other hierarchs instead, which I did. I also received a great deal of help from the deans of the Irshava Deanery, first Vasyl Zeikan Sr. and then Ivan Kostak, as well as from the head of the new Bilki Deanery,⁷⁰ Vitalii Shelemba, for which I am very grateful.

During many of those interviews I referred to the message of Dzhublyk concerning the need to increase the authority of the priests among the people. The following sections are based on the reactions to this query and on my ethnographic observations of the relations between priests and the people. Participating in celebrations, examinations, and meals in the seminary, watching processions of priests on important holy days, and listening to the chorus of prayers emerging from dozens of men dressed in black at times gave me the impression of dealing with an army: uniformly dressed men, who at

⁷⁰ The Bilki Deanery was established toward the end of my fieldwork in 2011 through the division of the larger Irshava Deanery into two parts. As the Bilki Deanery did not exist during the majority of my field research, when I refer to the Irshava Deanery throughout this work, I am referring to it before the 2011 division.

the command of a bishop, a seminary rector, or another high-ranking priest can transform into a body of clergy, singing, praying, reciting, and moving in unison. The “Amen” and a blessing function as an “at ease” command, after which the orderly rows turn into a crowd of chatting men. Still, these first impressions are quite superficial. The priests do not live together except for a few years of seminary studies. They live in local communities and have to negotiate and renegotiate their positions daily. The eparchial center has to apply a wide variety of technologies of control in order to assure that the priests follow the demands and directives of the global organization; nevertheless, the priests’ particular decisions and strategies are firmly located in the context of individual parishes. Below, I look at the situation in the Irshava Greek Catholic Deanery with the aim of determining the specific local background of the issue of priestly authority as one of the main messages of the new apparition site. I start with a small ethnographic vignette that gives the reader a glimpse into the strained nature of laity-clergy relations in contemporary Transcarpathia. This is followed by the presentation of some historical background (including the underground period) that sheds light on the position of priests with respect to the laity. I refer here to the information given in the previous chapter, adding to it some material concerning the economic basis of clerical activities, which, in my opinion, has been crucial to laity-clergy relations to the present day. I also argue that the Soviet underground period influenced, in fundamental ways, laity-clergy relations, and that, to the present day, these relations have developed differently in different parishes depending on how religious life developed there during the Soviet era. I subsequently present several variants of contemporary relations between parishioners and priests and some additional factors that have shaped them, combined with an analysis of the various strategies that priests employ in order to legitimize their authority. I conclude with reflections concerning the apparitional events as sites of competition among various visions of the church and its future.

Who’s in charge?

One Sunday, Father Ivan arrived at his church shortly before eight o’clock in the morning to find that the matins (*utrennia*) were already well under way. He was very surprised because just two days earlier he had announced that the matins were to commence at eight o’clock, and no one had objected. He quickly

put on his vestments and joined the people in prayer. Only after the prayers were over did he ask what had happened. He was told that the evening before they had met during the *psaltyr*⁷¹ and decided that it would be better to start the prayers earlier as everyone was busy with spring work in the fields. At the time, Father Ivan lived in his own house some twenty kilometers from the village, but he did have both a home phone and a mobile phone on which he could have been reached. The parishioners, however, not only thought that seeking his opinion on the matter was unnecessary, but also that there was no need to inform him of the change. After all, they had celebrated the matins without a priest throughout the Soviet era, and sometimes even after 1990 the congregation would sing the matins and vespers without a priest if, for whatever reason, he was not available. Father Ivan was told directly on this occasion that it was none of his business and that the church committee (*dvadtsatka*) was the decision-making organ, not the priest. This particular priest decided to swallow his pride and, instead of expressing his anger (although he confided in me later that he was shaking with rage inside), he decided to begin a long process of explaining to people what the role of the priest in the community is, and why it is he who should have a decisive voice in religious matters. I later talked to Father Ivan about this incident and he said:

Priests are like the apostles—Jesus sent them to bring the word of God to the people. And it is pure nonsense here that when a new priest comes to the village, the people tell him how he should serve, and what they want. I have heard it myself. I was myself told by my own parishioners, “Father, we are paying you so please do as we wish!” What a situation! And I had to tell the people, “You have to forgive me, it is true that you sustain me, and I do live on your money. But what sense does it make if I have to obey you? What kind of pastor would I then be? A shepherd has to lead his sheep and not the other way around! What would the sheep know if they were wiser than the shepherd, or does he come, as it is written in the Gospel, only to shear the sheep and take their milk? He would then start treating his calling as just a profession, earning the money and not caring.” And people told me, “Let it be so.” But then why do you need a priest at all? It is nonsense!

⁷¹ A common prayer session organized by local people in Greek Catholic parishes, usually without the presence of a priest (see Chapter 5 for details).

Father Ivan would come to find a common language with the people of this particular village and, while the misunderstandings and points of tension did not entirely disappear, he managed to stay there for a considerable number of years. However, this is not always the case. All the priests I interviewed indicated to me that, in their opinion, there was a general problem with the way in which people approached priests. They also claimed that the problem was more visible in some villages than in others. There were villages that accepted quite readily the priests that were sent to them by the eparchial authorities, while there were others where each new priest came under close scrutiny, and requests for new priests could be sent to the bishop several times before one was finally accepted and could settle into the parish.

The breadth of issues about which the parishioners can aspire to having a decisive voice is vast. The questions concern not only the building of new chapels, refurbishing of churches, and other matters related to parish finances, but also elements of the liturgy and devotions. I have met priests whom parishioners tried to instruct on matters, such as the kinds of prayers that should be read at funerals, what ritual acts should be included during the rite of baptism, and which elements of the liturgy could be abandoned and which had to be retained—matters that from the point of view of a priest lie exclusively in his area of competence. In May 2011, I attended final exams at the Greek Catholic seminary in Uzhhorod, where the seminarians defended their written work. The theme of relations between parishioners and priests emerged repeatedly, often brought up by the examiners, who challenged the candidates with questions about methods of solving conflicts between them and the laity. One of the lecturers, himself a parish priest, asked a student how he would react in a situation, taken from a recent case, in which a cantor felt free to preach to the congregation on an occasion when no priest was present. The candidate responded that he would try to explain that such a situation is inappropriate. There followed a long discussion about how some parishioners treat priests as paid employees who should do as they are told by their employers, that is, by their local religious community. From the point of view of parishioners, however, the issue is not so simple either. Any sense that the priests are just professional providers of a service is indeed mixed with the feeling that they are in fact chosen ones, blessed not only to serve but also to lead the people.

The effects of the work of underground Greek Catholic priests during the Soviet Era

How are we to understand this situation? The image of a cantor preaching in a church is actually not so far from the actual circumstances in Nyzhnie Bolotne during the Soviet era. The inhabitants of the village still remember well the two cantors, both named Mikhailo, who, in their opinion, were instrumental in leading the parish community through the difficult times of the Soviet regime. The first Mikhailo did not allow the Nyzhnie Bolotne church to be closed or to be taken over, in practice, by Orthodox priests, as I explain in detail below.⁷² His successor is fondly remembered as the person who organized all religious life in the village throughout the Soviet era, and as a man of strong character who enjoyed great respect right up to the time of his death shortly after the beginning of the Dzhublyk apparitions. Some people even told me that he was really “like a priest” who could support and counsel them in most personal and important matters.

As I explained in the previous chapter, the Greek Catholic Church was banned in the Soviet Union and its former bishops, priests, and adherents were encouraged either to transfer to the Orthodox Church or to abandon their religious life altogether (Bociurkiw 2006; Naumescu 2008a; Shlikhta 2004a,b). Those who did not comply were persecuted through imprisonment or exile, and in some cases murdered. Nevertheless, the Greek Catholic identity and religious practice were still sustained in western Ukraine and Transcarpathia at least in two ways, which are also important in terms of understanding the Dzhublyk phenomenon. First, Greek Catholic religious practices were maintained within the framework of the Orthodox Church that overtook a large portion not only of Greek Catholic buildings, but also adherents. Natalia Shlikhta (2004a, 2004b) describes the situation in Ukrainian Galicia, where the Orthodox Church maintained such Catholic devotional traditions as the rosary and the Stations of the Cross in former Catholic parishes out of fear of losing members, especially in the face of the state’s atheist propaganda. She calls this phenomenon, after Markus (1975), a “church within a church,” while other researchers have called it a “crypto-uniate community” (Bociurkiw 1977a: 5, 1977b: 84; Kolarz 1962: 241–43), “involuntary converts” (Bociurkiw

⁷² According to the documents of the Transcarpathian State Archive (1490/ 4d/ 152 and 175), the Orthodox parish was formally registered in Nyzhnie Bolotne. This fact is not present in the social memory of the village inhabitants today.

1977c: 433), or “uniate congregations in disguise” (Chadwick 1993: 51). Members of such communities within the Orthodox Church claimed to have remained “Greek Catholic in spirit” or “at heart,” to have remained “the same,” and to have preserved religious life both from atheism as well as from any changes that might have been attempted by the Orthodox authorities (Shlikhta 2004b: 268). For many authors this was the most significant way in which Greek Catholic devotional practice and, to a lesser extent, the Greek Catholic identity was preserved throughout the years that the church was officially banned. According to these authors, this was due to the fact that the second strategy of survival—participation in the activities of the Greek Catholic Church underground—was not widespread (Naumescu 2008a; Nowak 2008; Shlikhta 2004a). Nevertheless, although not all of western Ukraine was covered by the network of underground priests, there were particular locations in which their activity both sustained as well as transformed Greek Catholic traditions and the Greek Catholic identity in important ways, especially when some devoted priests returned from exile after the death of Stalin. The Irshava Deanery in Ukrainian Transcarpathia is a good example of an area where both strategies were present to a significant degree, often in neighboring locations. In some villages of the Irshava Deanery, former Greek Catholic communities retained their Catholic identity despite (or because of) officially belonging to the Orthodox Church; in other communities, the underground activity of the Catholic clergy and laity was very significant. Dzhublyk is located between two villages that were both Greek Catholic until 1949, that are majority Greek Catholic at present, but that practiced religion throughout the Soviet era in the two different ways described above.

Until the building began at and around the Dzhublyk apparition site, about two kilometers separated the houses at the eastern edge of Vil’khivka from those at the western edge of Nyzhnie Bolotne. After the apparition site emerged, the two villages grew much closer, with both private homes and Dzhublyk pilgrimage site buildings occupying the space that was effectively a no-man’s-land until recently, deemed too marshy for construction. The two villages have a joint administration, currently located in Vil’khivka. Nyzhnie Bolotne has its own preschool and school, but after the eighth grade, pupils who want to continue their education have to transfer to a secondary school in Vil’khivka or to another school in the region. There are intermarriages and friendly contacts between the inhabitants of the two villages but, as in many cases of neighboring settlements, their mutual stereotypes are not particularly flattering.

Vil'khivka is the larger of the two villages, and is located next to a major road linking the main Transcarpathian towns of Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, Irshava, Khust, Rachiv, and Tiachiv. There are cafés in Vil'khivka and even a small hotel. Many local inhabitants earn their living through various kinds of entrepreneurial activities. They see themselves (and they are considered by the people of Nyzhníe Bolotne) as more open to the influences of the contemporary world, whether one interprets that in a positive or a negative light. They are seen as gutsy, risk taking, and sharp, but also inclined to steal and cheat. They see themselves as less religiously observant, and view their own faith as shallower than the faith of the people in Nyzhníe Bolotne, whose inhabitants are judged by virtually everyone in the region, themselves included, as highly religious and extremely proud of their Catholic identity. Nyzhníe Bolotne is located a few kilometers away from the main road, with sections high on the hill slopes, practically in the woods. It is one of the villages of Transcarpathia where a great amount of money is earned through seasonal work, mostly on construction sites from Siberia to Spain. The inhabitants are very proud of their own great religiosity, and especially the religious lives they led during the Soviet period.

In the late 1940s, the Vil'khivka Parish "reunited" with the Orthodox Church under the leadership of parish priest Stepan Horzov, who served the village from 1942 to 1949. Later, the Orthodox parish priests changed relatively frequently, but among those that stayed longer in the village were Stepan Fedorko, Andrii Hleba, Ilia Sidor, and finally Ivan Kormosh, who joined the Greek Catholic Church in 1990 together with the parish. The four priests listed above who served in Vil'khivka before Ivan Kormosh were all former Greek Catholic priests who signed the papers to join the Orthodox Church in the 1940s. Stepan Horzov and Stepan Fedorko, however, revoked their signatures in 1956 and stopped serving officially as priests.⁷³ Ilia Sidor and Andrii Hleba were also trained as Greek Catholics and signed papers of "reunification" with the Orthodox Church in 1949. One can interpret their work as an extreme case of the "church within a church" (Shlikhta 2004a). In 2011, only one of them, Ilia Sidor, was still alive and could be interviewed. He told me that he was approached by Ivan Marhitych in 1956, who suggested that there was a way to secretly return to the Greek Catholic Church by signing an appropriate declaration in the presence of two witnesses and sending it to the Vatican. He

⁷³ Personal communication with Fr. Danyl Bendas, a historian of the MGCE, July 2011. He said that they later served illegally as underground Greek Catholic priests. See also Viktor Brovdii (2008: 33).

signed it, and also knew of five other priests in the Irshava Deanery who did the same: Nikolai Puza, Stepan Fedorko, Iuri Mateicha, Iuli Mikulaniniets and Andrii Hleba.⁷⁴ Even as they continued to serve their parishes as Orthodox priests, they were expected to the greatest degree possible to maintain Catholic traditions, such as confession on the first Friday of the month and the rosary, and to involve only one another in terms of their liturgical practice. Sidor told me that the Soviet authorities allowed for only a limited number of priests from other parishes to be invited to the feast days of particular churches, and these six priests invited only one another, excluding their truly Orthodox colleagues. They also helped one another in their pastoral practice—for example, if one of them was sick and there was a need to conduct a funeral service in his parish, he would ask another of the six for help. Sidor told me that he was once asked to conduct a funeral service in Borzhavs'ke, the home village of Ivan Marhitych, which was usually served by Andrii Hleba, who was sick at the time. Marhitych was present at the funeral, not as a celebrant but standing in the crowd of people. At the moment when everyone was to come to Sidor and kiss the cross he was holding in his hand, Ivan Marhitych also came and kissed the cross. In this way, he signaled to those believers who consciously remained Greek Catholics, despite the formal registration of the Orthodox parish, that Ilia Sidor was one of them. However, Sidor told me that in Silce, the village where he lived and normally served, only a very limited number of parishioners knew about his secret adherence to the underground Catholic Church. For most of them, he was just their priest who served them in the way they wanted—in this case, keeping all the previous devotional practices that they knew from their parents and grandparents, but within the formal structure of the Orthodox Church.

I have yet to meet any Vil'khivka parishioners who admitted to knowing about their Orthodox priests' secret adherence to the Catholic Church. Moreover, according to the elderly inhabitants of Vil'khivka village, it was not the activities of priests but their own actions that saved the integrity of religious life in the village under the Soviet regime. According to my interlocutors, the Soviet authorities wanted to convert a church in Vil'khivka into a museum or a culture club. In order to prevent this from happening, parishioners gathered and decided to agree to convert to Orthodoxy, as from their point of view this

⁷⁴ In his diploma thesis defended at the Uzhorod Greek Catholic Seminary, Viktor Brovdii gives the following names: Andrii Mareiko, Viktor Fedorchak, Stepan Horzo, Viktor Sidor (this is definitely a mistake), and Andrii Hleba (Viktor Brovdii 2008: 33).

would involve no practical changes in their religious life. They now present their decision to convert to Orthodoxy as a move that saved the faith of their ancestors. This is similar to the situation described by Naumescu for Ukrainian Galicia (2008a), in which the majority of Greek Catholics there ended up in the Orthodox Church with little effect on their religious practice, as they were able to retain even such straightforwardly Latin elements as the rosary and the Stations of the Cross (2007: 169). However, Naumescu also writes that “Galician popular religiosity was actually better preserved in the ‘reunited’ church than in the ‘underground’ church” (2008a: 169). I do not think that this is true for Transcarpathia, or at least not for the Irshava Deanery, which had very active underground priests such as Ivan Marhitych and Petro Pavlo Madiar. Naumescu writes that the attempts of the Orthodox hierarchy to “Orthodoxize” Ukrainian religious practices came to nothing, and the priests tended to continue following local traditions instead. According to Ilia Sidor, only in those parishes where there were families or small communities of Orthodox believers predating the Soviet period was the Orthodox eparchy in a position to eliminate certain Greek Catholic practices. The Transcarpathian State Archive⁷⁵ and the archive of the Orthodox eparchy⁷⁶ include both invitations to former Greek Catholic priests to celebrate a Divine Liturgy in Uzhhorod and Mukachevo in front of a commission that would decide if their practice was Orthodox enough, and instructions for inspectors who were to travel to the churches of the region to decide if they could be considered fully reunited with Orthodoxy. The long checklist of features to be observed included such diverse elements as the types of icons found in the church, details of the images, the types of candles used, details of priestly clothing, as well as differences in the rites of marriage and baptism, in the wording of some prayers, and the celebration of such Catholic feasts as the Immaculate Conception. In practice, however, the ways in which particular parishes were evaluated also depended on local networks and negotiations. Ilia Sidor claimed to have had good personal relations with Orthodox hierarchs and reliable contacts in the eparchial headquarters so that he would have been warned before someone would be sent to his parish to evaluate its Orthodoxy, and could undertake appropriate measures, even canceling services if necessary.

⁷⁵ State Archive of the Transcarpathian Region (hereafter: DAZO) 1490/5/98.

⁷⁶ These materials have not been catalogued. I have seen them in the private archive of one of my interlocutors, who said that he took them for safekeeping out of fear that they would deteriorate or be thrown away at the eparchial headquarters.

Nevertheless, Silce, the main village where Ilia Sidor lived and served throughout the Soviet era and into the period of Ukrainian independence, was included in the 1982 list, produced by the state's department for monitoring religious affairs, enumerating those parishes where "Greek Catholic elements were to be found."⁷⁷ Both Nyzhnie Bolotne and Vil'khivka were listed there as well. One of the oldest inhabitants of Vil'khivka, a person who was instrumental in organizing the return of the local community to the Greek Catholic Church in 1990, told me that during the Soviet period, Orthodox priests "served us as we told them to do, and we continued to go to church just as we did, never changing our faith. There were some who wanted to make us Orthodox, but it did not happen and it will never happen as long as I am alive. We were born Greek Catholics and we will die Greek Catholics." Interestingly, the older people in Vil'khivka, as in other villages primarily served by priests who converted to Orthodoxy and where the activity of underground priests was limited, usually do not call their priests *otets* ("Father"), but *pan sviashchennik* ("Mr. Clergyman"). They said that they could not call a priest "father" because he was their employee. He deserved respect, but not the title of "father," which would have implied their subordination and obedience. They genuinely felt that it was they and not the priests who were in charge of the village's religious life. For example, an old cantor from Vil'khivka told me in May 2007:

One priest had already been with us for ten years when on Good Friday, when the *epitaphios* (*plashchanytsia*⁷⁸) is taken out, he turned it around the other way. That was it—we decided then and there that he was not conducting our service on Easter Sunday....Another priest came and this one, while reading the *panakhida*,⁷⁹ first read one for the dead, then for health—yes, yes, we have a *panakhida* for health—then a blessing, and then the announcements. And we told him that we wanted a blessing at the very end. He complained a bit, but then he did as we wanted.

In Vil'khivka, people feel that, throughout the Soviet period, they conducted their religious lives as they had before—in their own church building and following local traditions—and that they continue to do so to the present day. After 1990, the Vil'khivka Parish returned to the Greek Catholic Church,

⁷⁷ DAZO 1490/5/98.

⁷⁸ An icon on a large cloth depicting Christ after he had been removed from the cross.

⁷⁹ A memorial service in the Eastern Christian tradition.

together with the priest who served there at the time and who was educated in the Orthodox seminary. He was a local person who had been born in Vil'khivka and wanted to stay in the village regardless of any organizational allegiance, so he agreed to the suggestion of the parish council to ask the head of the Greek Catholic eparchy to accept him as a Catholic priest. He was accepted and continued to serve the parish until the apparitions in Dzhublyk began. The man who was the leader of the parish council at the time told me, however, that this return to the Catholic Church took place only with partial support of the local community. In his understanding, older people—those who had witnessed the change from Orthodoxy to Catholicism in 1949—wanted to return to what they perceived as the faith of their forefathers, while younger people did not see the need for such a change. The older generation, who dominated the parish council at the time, did go through with the formal change to Catholicism without in fact consulting the parishioners, and the rest of the community noticed that something important had happened only when their priest shaved his beard (in Transcarpathia, at that time, wearing a beard was a clear sign of belonging to the Orthodox clergy). There were discussions and disputes over the matter but, in the end, the community agreed to rejoin the Greek Catholic Church. In 1996, however, some families decided to separate and form an Orthodox community, meaning that there are now two religious communities in Vil'khivka: a large Greek Catholic one and a smaller Orthodox one. This split of the community into two religious groups was, for both my Orthodox and Greek Catholic interlocutors, a more traumatic event than had been the shifts of the community as a whole from the Greek Catholic Church to the Orthodox Church in 1949 and back again in 1990. I explore the value of unity for people in the next chapter. What is important for my argument here is the fact that Vil'khivka is one of a number of villages in the Irshava Deanery where the underground Greek Catholic priests were not very active during the Soviet era. Everyone who wanted to go to church during the Soviet period attended services in the Orthodox Church, and only a very limited number of families participated in services occasionally organized in private homes by Ivan Marhitych or other underground priests. The fact that the community was served by a priest who secretly signed a document of return to the jurisdiction of the Vatican did not change the relationship between the priest and his parishioners, who were not aware of this change.

In the neighboring village of Nyzhnie Bolotne, the situation was quite different. The Greek Catholic priest Stefan Dufiniets, who served the village

between 1936 and 1949, signed papers of “reunification” with the Orthodox Church, but left the village immediately afterwards, leaving it without a priest. An Orthodox parish was thus registered there officially, as is confirmed in the materials concerning Dufiniets that I have found in the Transcarpathian State Archive.⁸⁰ There remains, however, a clear split between what the documents say and the social memory of the village’s inhabitants, who recall that when the demands of the Soviet authorities regarding the change to Orthodoxy became clear, Dufiniets told his parishioners that “the faith is not a shirt, one cannot change it” (*vira ne sorochka ei ne miniaiut*). No one I talked to in the village knew that Stefan Dufiniets had in fact signed a declaration of unification with the Orthodox Church, and the formal registration of the Orthodox parish was either forgotten or maybe never widely known. Moreover, their cantors, especially the two Mikhailos that I mentioned above, managed to prevent the church building from being taken away from the community. It is, however, difficult to say how this was accomplished in practice. People just reported that they did not give back the key and, as the local village Communists were also devout Catholics, the matter was hushed up. The cantor had a key, opened the church as needed, and even rang the church bells. This state of affairs lasted until the mid-1950s, when Ivan Marhitych, after his return from exile, suggested that, in order to secure the stability of the village’s religious life, they should ask for an official Orthodox priest, preferably Ilia Sidor, who apparently had already secretly reunited with the Catholic Church. The villagers did not know about his secret reunification, or at least those I could interview did not know about it, but they accepted Marhitych’s suggestion. While Ilia Sidor thus officially became the parish priest, in practice he came to Nyzhnie Bolotne only for important feast days and once a month for the Divine Liturgy. The church building, however, continued to be opened every day for prayer by a village cantor, and people gathered there to sing all those parts of Divine Liturgy, vespers, and matins that could be executed without the presence of a priest. Hence, both in their perception and in the perception of the inhabitants of neighboring villages, they remained Catholics throughout the Soviet period and never converted to Orthodoxy.

While everyday activities were carried out in Nyzhnie Bolotne by laypeople, the village was also an important hub of activity for underground priests. The most active among them were Petro Oros, and, after his death in 1953, Ivan

⁸⁰ DAZO 1490/4d/175.

Marhitych and Petro Pavlo Madiar. While very few families attended underground services in Vil'khivka, most people with whom I talked in Nyzhnie Bolotne either attended them or knew that their parents had done so. People of various ages also remember that, as children, they were introduced to the principles of the Catholic faith by underground priests. Especially remembered in this respect is Petro Pavlo Madiar, a Basilian monk who was born in 1923 in Bilki, a nearby village in the Irshava Deanery. After the dissolution of the Basilian monasteries in Transcarpathia, he started to work for the railway. Then he took ill and had to have one of his lungs removed. Afterwards, he worked as a seasonal worker in other parts of Ukraine, as a construction worker, and on a collective farm until he retired in 1983.⁸¹ He was secretly consecrated into the priesthood in 1957, only after the most aggressive anti-Catholic campaigns of the 1940s and 1950s had ended. When not working on a building site, Pavlo Madiar lived in the village of Bilki and conducted his underground services there. He is by far the most remembered underground priest in the Irshava Deanery of whom people still have personal memories. Ivan Marhitych was the one who coordinated the work of underground priests, sustained contacts with the underground church in Galicia, and also, as far as possible, with the Catholic Church abroad.⁸² He also conducted underground services and educated a new generation of priests. But it was Pavlo Madiar who was the most frequent guest in the homes of Greek Catholics, celebrating liturgies, baptizing and catechizing children, listening to confessions, and supporting people spiritually and even materially whenever they needed help. He is remembered as a person who would talk to anyone, who did not differentiate between those who went to the Orthodox Church and those who did not, and who would give the shirt off his back to a person in need. He was tireless and devoted; and in many houses one can find Madiar's handwritten or typed prayers and sermons. He would prepare them and type up multiple copies to distribute among the faithful. He was a very prolific writer, but many of his essays remain unpublished. In recent years, the Basilian brothers have undertaken efforts to collect and preserve his legacy. But his writings have not yet been catalogued. I looked through several folders of his manuscripts containing materials written both during the Soviet era and after the relegalization of the

⁸¹ Interview with Pavlo Madiar, stored in the archive of Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, number 11-1-1-499.

⁸² His private archive bears witness to his wide-ranging contacts both in Ukraine and abroad.

Greek Catholic Church. These included sermons for various occasions, catechism materials in the form of questions and answers, and spiritual poems, as well as documents of an administrative and political character. Pavlo Madiar was, as much as Ivan Marhitych, a Ukrainian patriot, unswervingly supporting the unification of the Mukachevo Eparchy with the UGCC. He died in 1996.

While many people I talked to actually met Pavlo Madiar during his lifetime, Petro Oros, another famous underground priest, is known to most people through materials published both locally and at the eparchial headquarters, particularly since the beginning of his canonization process. The narrative of his life and death is a well-established element in the social memory of the Greek Catholics of the Irshava Deanery. Born in 1917, Oros was ordained as a priest in 1942 and sent to serve in Bilki Parish. After the delegalization of the Greek Catholic Church, he continued to live in Bilki and served underground. In 1952, a wave of arrests eliminated not only Ivan Marhitych from the Irshava region, but also other active underground Greek Catholic priests such as Ivan Horinetski, Ivan Roman, and Ivan Chenheri. Thereafter, Petro Oros was in charge of underground services for nearly the entire region until August 28, 1953, when he was shot by the local militia while returning from an underground service. His body was not turned over to his family, but was buried in the woods near the village of Kamianske, where the fresh grave was quickly discovered by local people. It was subsequently exhumed and moved to the police station in Irshava (Bendas 1999). Only after the relegalization of the Greek Catholic Church did witnesses (former militia workers) confirm that Petro Oros had been buried under the floor of the local militia station garage all those years. His remains were exhumed in 1992 and borne in a procession from Irshava to Bilki on August 23 of that year. He was buried in a chapel next to the Greek Catholic church in Bilki, and in 1999, a monument to him was erected next to the former militia station in Irshava where his body was found (Bendas 1999). The cult of Petro Oros has grown and become increasingly important to the social memory of the underground years, especially among the faithful of the Irshava Deanery. His importance in the pantheon of MGCE priest-martyrs also grew, and claims started to circulate in the 2000s concerning his secret consecration as bishop by Theodore Romzha in 1946. At the time of my research the eparchy did not yet have confirmation of this fact from the Vatican, but great efforts were being made to find evidence for it.

In recent years, efforts have been greatly intensified to establish a common memory of the suffering of the underground MGCE as a whole and that of

each deanery in particular. The most prominent figure in this regard is the Blessed Theodore Romzha, who was most probably killed in the Mukachevo hospital in 1947 (Pushkash 2001). In 2010–2011, every deanery of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy was required to organize night prayers next to an icon of Romzha in the Uzhhorod Cathedral. In late June 2011, the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth, seventy-fifth anniversary of his holy orders, and tenth anniversary of his beatification were celebrated extensively in Uzhhorod. A huge procession from the seminary (also named after Theodore Romzha) to Uzhhorod Cathedral made the presence of Greek Catholics in the city and in Transcarpathia very much visible. At the same time, according to researchers from the University of Uzhhorod who conducted several surveys on this subject,⁸³ there is relatively little knowledge of Theodore Romzha in Transcarpathia. At present, a common background image of the “martyr-votary of faith” (*muchennik-ispovidnik viry*) is emerging, onto which all particular local images of martyrs are being projected, including those of Theodore Romzha, Petro Oros, and Oleksandr Hira. During my interviews in Transcarpathian villages, people conflated narratives of Romzha with those of Oros, mixing up their names and the circumstances of their deaths. We can now observe the formation not only of a cult of particular priest-martyrs, but also the creation of a generic narrative of a martyr-votary life of suffering.

There is still relatively little analysis concerning the work of underground priests in Transcarpathia, although the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv has already gathered a lot of interesting materials, especially in the form of interviews with former underground priests. Nowak (2008) and Naumescu (2008a), writing about Galicia, and Pusztai and Pilipkó (2008), writing of the Hungarian villages of Transcarpathia, note that few people regularly participated in the activities of the underground church, indicating that the “church within the church” was a more widespread and successful way of sustaining Catholic identity. This reading corresponds to the self-image of Nyzhnie Bolotne inhabitants, who view their village as quite exceptional in terms of the intensity of its underground involvement. On the other hand, the activity of underground priests did leave an important mark on people’s understanding of religious identity and worship. This does not mean that the villages that were frequented by underground priests are at present exclusively Greek Catholic—on the contrary, there are Orthodox communities in all of them

⁸³ Diana Shterr, personal communication, June 2011.

except for Nyzhnie Bolotne. They are also not devoid of conflicts between parishioners and priests. Nevertheless, there are marked differences in the ways in which people regard priests, depending on the shape of the local religious life during the Soviet era.

It can be said that since the relegalization of the Greek Catholic Church, a double discourse about priests has developed: one is built around the image of a fearless underground Greek Catholic priest and has thus far been more widespread in villages where such priests were active. The other one is built around the experience of priests who operated legally during the Soviet era, that is, as officially Orthodox priests. Moreover, the discourse concerning underground priests has now developed into a full-fledged cult within the organizational church, a cult that can be instrumentalized by various interests groups. It presents priests as carriers of a spiritual, sometimes even miraculous power, who, despite being placed above ordinary people and considered worthy of the highest respect, are there for every person, offering them the strength they need to meet the complexities of life. The second discourse presents priests as service providers who acquired their skills in their seminaries, are employed by their local communities, and clearly tasked with serving the people and following rather than leading them. The claim to authority in the first case is seen as part of the personal charisma of priests, which is only accentuated by belonging to the organizational category of clergy. In this sense, cantor Mikhailo of Nyzhnie Bolotne was “almost a priest,” as he was regarded as a person with personal charisma. The charisma of underground priests is inseparable from their moral qualities, lives of courage, and even miraculous powers. The faith of Petro Oros, for example, was considered by some to be so strong that his prayers could influence the weather. As one of the priests told me in an interview:

Bishop Marhitych told me about father Petro Oros—they were friends. I asked, “What was his faith like?” He answered, “He had such a strong faith! Once we were together and there was a heavy rain and he said that we had to move from one house to another and it would be good if we did not get wet. And he suggested praying and we did and the rain stopped, just for that moment that we had to go to another house. And then it continued raining.” So strong was his faith.

Dzhublyk and the underground priests

The supporters of the Dzhublyk apparitions see them as being confirmed by as well as confirming the sanctity of underground priests' lives. One of the devotees from Nyzhnie Bolotne, a woman in her sixties, told me:

He was travelling on foot, Father Oros. When he was walking through Vil'khivka, well, in that village he could not enter any house—this was a dead place.⁸⁴ And in our village, although he could not enter just any house, he could come to some of them even at night, knock, and they would let him in. So, while he was walking through Vil'khivka he made small crosses over their doorsteps, one could hardly notice what he was doing. And he told people there that it could be a beautiful place in the future if people started to believe again. He was on his way to the spring [Dzhublyk]—he prayed there. I cannot be sure, but maybe he had a premonition (*zadum*) that he would be killed, and then the Virgin Mary appears? People say that he sat next to that spring very often, praying and drinking water. He was a great man. And after him Father Pavlo Madiar was another great man—he even performed miracles during his lifetime!

Atanasii Tsyipesh, the manager of the apparition site, told me that he was convinced of the linkage between Dzhublyk and the underground priests:

On August 27 they killed Father Petro Oros—he was shot in Silce, on the road to Zariche. And after many years, the Virgin Mary also appeared on August 27. And Marhitych as well....And Father Petro Madiar, he was our spiritual guide during the catacomb years. Every first Friday of the month, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy in our houses, very often in my own house. And I have no doubts that it was through him, that he is the person thanks to whom the apparition took place. He was an eminent martyr, a great votary (*ispovednik*), and lived his whole life with only one lung. And the second one did not work properly during the last ten years of his life. It bled, but he never complained, always worked hard, and, for me personally, he is a saint, and I strongly believe that, in a way, he also brought about this apparition.

⁸⁴ In terms of deep faith.

The portraits of underground priests hang on the walls of the cloister chapel in Dzhublyk, and in 2008, on the anniversary of the first apparitions, they were displayed on the external walls to be seen by all the pilgrims. In 2009, granite plates with the names of underground priests were placed along the path leading from the main entrance of the site toward the chapel. The majority of those commemorated are priests who were active in Transcarpathia, but the names of important UGCC hierarchs were also included, as well as the names of two laypeople: Mikhailo Kobrin, one of the two cantors that led the religious life of Nyzhnie Bolotne throughout the Soviet period, and Iosip Terelya, a Ukrainian dissident born in Transcarpathia and buried in the graveyard of Nyzhnie Bolotne. Making reference to underground activities is one way in which the very existence of Dzhublyk is legitimized. As I have shown in Chapter 2 with the example of Lishnia and the Ukrainian Orthodox (*Pravovirna*) Greek Catholic Church, legitimation through claiming direct connections with underground priests is a strategy commonly used in Ukraine when it comes to religious matters. In Dzhublyk, however, this means of legitimation has another aspect, that is, the explicit goal of raising the authority of present-day priests as communicated by the Virgin Mary through the visionaries. One of the ways this goal is achieved is by invoking connections with the heroic underground priesthood.

At Dzhublyk, the cult of underground priests can be understood as a commentary on laity-clergy relations, where the priests are elevated to a sanctified status, thereby producing a counterbalance to the discourse of priests as service providers subordinate to their local communities. The importance of priestly authority is also developed at Dzhublyk through the insistence on priestly mediation in the sacrament of reconciliation. What Thomas N. Tentler writes for the eve of the Reformation in Western Europe is in my opinion equally true for contemporary Transcarpathia: the first principle of the sacrament of reconciliation in the Catholic Church is the sacramentally ordained priest's dominance (Tentler 1977: 345). Interestingly, individual confessions to a priest remained, according to my interlocutors, the predominant form of this sacrament in the Catholic Church underground, while a corporate confession was often practiced in Orthodox parishes. The importance and need of frequent individual confession was stressed by all of the Catholic priests to whom I talked. At Dzhublyk, the importance of confessions is visible in the very layout of the site—there are lines of confession booths built all around the central square, as well as along the staircase leading to the Cross of All

Christians. During my first visits to Dzhublyk, I was taken aback by their presence—huge wooden structures, carefully sculpted and ready to use, sitting in the middle of a construction site. This is even more striking if one remembers that confession booths are rarely seen in Greek Catholic churches, where a place behind the iconostas is used for this purpose. It is also interesting that the confession booths are rarely used for actual confessions even at Dzhublyk—the priests prefer to listen to people while standing or sitting on simple chairs scattered around the sanctuary. The physical presence of confessionals seems to have the clear purpose of reminding any pilgrims who come to Dzhublyk about the importance of confession. Before and during liturgies, crowds of people queue for their confessions to be heard. Most of the priests, who told me that they go to Dzhublyk despite their personal doubts or critical stance toward the present management of the apparition site, said that they want to make the sacrament of reconciliation available to the pilgrims.

Father Atanasii and other monks with whom I talked at Dzhublyk called attention to the fact that the underground priests provided a monthly confession on the first Friday of the month. This is more often than the official requirement of the Catholic Church (once a year) and also more than the practice within the Orthodox parishes in Transcarpathia, where a yearly confession is the rule. Still, Father Petro, a priest and the father of one of the visionaries, was adamant in his insistence on the importance of confession, advocating a daily confession as ideal and a weekly confession as a prerequisite for a fruitful spiritual life.

The economic and legal basis of parish life

I have shown above that during the Soviet era, even in those villages where underground priests were active, a large part of people's religious life was practically organized by laymen. It was the decision of laypeople to invite a priest into their homes, and they were the ones who had to organize his coming for the underground liturgy, to inform interested neighbors, and to provide security for the gathering. In many cases when a priest was not immediately available, people conducted rituals themselves. Those who went to Orthodox churches also learned that they were able to shape the religious life of their parishes due to the precarious position of the church as an organization in the Soviet Union and the considerable concessions that the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church had to make in order to keep former Greek Catholics in its

parishes. Moreover, the feeling that the laity has a decisive voice in shaping religious life was also strengthened by the ways in which parish life was legally shaped during the Soviet era.

In the previous chapter, I showed how, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the relationship between the Catholic Church and the state in the Hungarian part of Austria-Hungary, and particularly the state's nationality policies (Pekar 1971, 1997; Pop and Voloshyn 2010; Pronin 2005), led to a certain estrangement of Greek Catholic priests from their parishioners. Most works to date have presented this type of estrangement as the result of the "Magyarization" of Catholic Church functionaries. However, some authors also point to the economic background of particular conflicts between priests and parishioners (Svitlynets' 2002). Although the priests' current material situation and especially the character of the financial demands placed on parishioners by the clergy differ greatly from those one could observe in Transcarpathia at the beginning of the twentieth century, they are no less important. We can now still see the effects of the parish reforms that took place in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and have remained in place, with little change, in today's independent Ukraine.

In his history of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia, Atanasii Pekar gives a short overview of the economic conditions of priests from the beginning of the MGCE's existence (1997: 155–163). He observes that one of the important points of the union with the Catholic Church (which took place for Transcarpathia in Uzhhorod in 1649) was the postulated equation of the Greek Catholic clergy with their Roman Catholic counterparts. Priests were freed from any obligations (taxes or work) to landowners. The latter were also obliged to provide parish priests with land for subsistence purposes. Priests were also entitled to collect church tax from their parishioners, were to be paid for ritual services (funerals, weddings, baptisms), and entitled to a certain amount of work from parishioners. Although, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, parishioner payments were a constant object of dispute between Latin and Greek Catholic clergy, the situation between parishioners and priests was clearly delineated. Taxes and payments for services were not a matter of negotiation between priests and parishioners, but were ratified by the church hierarchy and the Austro-Hungarian state. When parishioners thought that a priest was trying to charge excessively for his services, they brought their complaints before the state organs (Pekar 1997: 158). In addition to this, parish priests had also been receiving state subsidies since 1738. Moreover, when

serfdom was abolished in Austria-Hungary in 1848, the tax and work obligations of parishioners to their priests remained untouched, which, as Pekar writes, “resulted in the complete estrangement of priests from parishioners in the second half of the nineteenth century” (1997: 161). In very poor parishes that were unable to pay their priests adequately, priests were additionally subsidized by the state. After the inclusion of the region into Czechoslovakia following World War I and a few initial years of confusion, priests were granted state subsidies as well as various welfare privileges similar to state functionaries (support for their wives and children, pensions). At the same time, collection of annual church taxes from parishioners was discontinued. During the Hungarian occupation of Transcarpathia (1939–1945), priests continued to receive state salaries.

The situation changed dramatically after the inclusion of Transcarpathia in the USSR. Natalia Shlikhta, in her work on the survival strategies and everyday forms of religious life in the Ukrainian Exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church under Soviet rule, presents a number of changes in religious policy and its implementation between 1945 and 1971, while still also highlighting “the underlying continuity in the attitude of state authorities towards the Church” (Shlikhta 2004b: 40). According to Shlikhta, notwithstanding the fluctuations in official religious policy, two basic principles can be seen as stably underlying Soviet attitudes toward the church during the period in question: the first was keeping the church isolated from society; the second was to undermine the church as an organization with a strict hierarchical (vertical) system of subordination and an orderly (horizontal) network. The first objective was realized by pushing the church into a position of “traditionalism,” that is, turning it into a kind of organization that could not relate or was irrelevant to the problems of a Soviet society that was undergoing profound transformations. Any attempt on the part of the church to prove its social usefulness or adapt to the contemporary sociopolitical context was criticized and countered. The second goal was attained primarily through administrative and economic measures. According to Shlikhta, one important aspect of this policy was the taxation of church servants’ (cantors, cleaners) and priests’ salaries. It was common practice before 1917 for priests to earn their living through the performance of liturgies and the sacraments, for which they received individual payments (2004b: 53). In the 1950s, the introduction of fixed salaries for priests, which were paid by local parish councils, was an important change in relations between priests, parishioners, and the state. The taxation of priests at rates between 69 and 81

percent became a common practice that led to the social marginalization of the clergy. However, the introduction of fixed salaries for priests was nothing new in Transcarpathia, as they were salaried both in Hungary and in Czechoslovakia. The difference was the source of the payment—what had once been paid by the state, which also secured clergy privileges in terms of contributions in kind from parishioners—was now paid by the local parish community directly.

Most importantly, though, in 1961 the Archbishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church introduced substantial revisions to the Church Statutes of 1945 that "can be viewed as the climax of the implementation of the regime's objective of the institutional destruction of the Church in the postwar context" (Shlikhta 2004b: 104). The effects of the changes introduced by those reforms can still be seen today in the way people view their relationship with the church as an organization and with its local representatives, the priests. As a result of these reforms, the priest was no longer formally a member of the local religious community, but was treated as an employee of the parish council, which signed him to a work agreement and could fire him any time (Stricker 1995). Priests were also no longer able to represent their parishes before state authorities and, moreover, parishes became independent of their diocesan bishops, who lost all their rights in that regard. The bishop could not even appoint priests, but instead could only "approve" the choice of the local council (Shlikhta 2004b). Moreover, the new statutes differentiated between religious communities (including all parishioners), the twenty founding members (the so-called *dvadtsatka*, lit. "group of twenty"), and the parish council (composed of a curator [*kurator*], a vice-curator, and a treasurer [*kasir*]). In practice, it was the *dvadtsatka*, led by the parish council (*kuratoria*), that decided all church-related matters. Shlikhta writes that, from the point of view of the Soviet regime, such reforms aimed both at weakening the organizational church and at taking influence away from the majority of church members, who could intervene with state authorities only through the intercession of the *dvadtsatka*. However, she also explains that one could interpret these changes as the introduction of representative democracy into religious life. Nevertheless, she does not choose to support this particular interpretation, adding that it would mean taking the changes out of local context. It seems that Shlikhta could not entertain the possibility that Soviet policies might have actually led to the democratization of any aspect of everyday life. I suggest, however, that although it is difficult to judge whether democratization was one of the aims of the reforms, the influence

of the laity was in fact strengthened. For my argument it is important to point out that these reforms created a legal and practical environment in which parishioners came to feel that they should have a decisive voice in religious matters and that priests were their servants and subordinates.

Interestingly, the character of the relationship between parishioners and the organizational church in Ukraine did not change much after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As noted in the previous chapter, in Ukraine, religious groupings (communities, centers, administrations, monasteries, religious brotherhoods, missionary societies, seminaries, and religious schools) can register their statutes with state organs and thereby become recognized as legal persons. The basic form of religious organization is the religious community (*relihiina hromada*), established through a process of registration with state organs carried out by a minimum of ten community members. Religious communities have the right to freely choose and later also change the religious center (*upravlinniya*) they belong to, and are represented before the state and church organs by a council of at least ten people, although the Soviet-era term *dvadtsatka* is still in use. Each community makes a request to the headquarters of the church of their choice, applying for recognition and for a priest to be provided. Neither the organizational church nor the state have any financial obligations to such a community—the parishioners have to finance their clergymen themselves and are responsible for raising and maintaining church buildings. Church buildings, including parsonages, most often remain the property of the local religious community or are given to the community for use by the state. If a community decides to withdraw from a given church (for example, when an Orthodox community decides to become Greek Catholic), it is free to do so, and the buildings and financial contributions go with it. Other details of financing (for example, contributions to eparchial headquarters) depend on internal church politics, which is in turn influenced by the amount of financial support a given church receives from private sponsors or from foreign organizations.⁸⁵ In general, parishioner contributions are an important source of income for the organizational church, a fact that is clearly reflected in the organization of the everyday workings of religious communities. Church funds are indeed not overseen by priests, but by the heads or treasurers of parish councils, who also usually wield the official parish stamp.

⁸⁵ For example, the international organization Church in Need (and especially its German branch, *Kirche im Not*) was instrumental in providing financial support to churches in Transcarpathia in the 1990s.

Recently, however, particular churches have actually worked to reestablish their control over the parishes, including their finances and property. One of the main arguments I pursue in my work is that what has been happening in many areas of the former Soviet Union over the last twenty years is not primarily a revival of religious life understood as a return to belief, that is, as a change in the internal attitude of a previously atheistic population. A belief in the ontological existence of transcendental powers in a variety of forms seems to be the rule, rather than the exception in the former Soviet Union. What is problematic is the place assigned to religious organizations in managing the individual and communal lives of people who hold such transcendental beliefs. Therefore, the so-called “religious revival” following the collapse of the Soviet Union does not primarily involve the revival of belief, understood as a mental state, and not even the revival of certain religious practices, which, as Dragadze convincingly showed, often became “domesticated” (1993), but the revival of the public presence of religious organizations that had lost their grip on religious life in the Soviet Union and are now working toward regaining that control.

In doing this, religious organizations cannot directly challenge existing state legal formulations. Still, the church hierarchy can try to convince parishioners that they should voluntarily reshape the organization of their parish life in order to allow the organizational church a greater presence. In March 2011, all of the MGCE’s parish priests received a new regulatory note from eparchial headquarters concerning the management of parishes. This was not the first time that the eparchial authorities attempted to reformulate the rules of parish management. According to Danyl Bendas, a historian of the eparchy, the present regulations were inspired to some extent by the statute on the management of parish life that was approved in 1917, but not officially published in the eparchial journal *Dushpastyr* until 1924.⁸⁶ The bulk of the old text concerns the economics of parish life, and especially control over the various types of donations made to the local church. These were to be controlled jointly by the parish priest and the two curators (*kuratory*), who were elected by all of the parishioners from among the male, respectable, and relatively affluent members of the community. They were tasked with the preparation of a yearly report to the bishop, and were to consult with him on all matters of substantial expenditure, especially general refurbishments and purchases of property. This statute began with the

⁸⁶ *Dushpastyr*, 1924 (nos. 9 and 10) and 1925 (nos. 1 and 2).

following phrase: “As the church is established for the preservation and service of religion, as well as for the provision of salvation for the souls of believers, church property must serve this aim and the management of property must therefore be carried out under the control of a diocesan bishop and in the understanding of his ultimate supervisory rights.”⁸⁷

Recent attempts at regulation have aimed at the formal reintroduction of clerical control over parish life. The new regulatory note from 2011 begins with a reminder that “the life of the parish takes place under the guidance of the diocesan bishop, who is the shepherd of the local church and who is assisted by syncelli and protosyncelli, protopresbyters (deans), and his particular colleagues, the parish priests (administrators), who are responsible for the care of souls in their given parish under the guidance of the very same bishop.”⁸⁸ Following this, it was established that the highest organ of parish life is the general assembly of parishioners under the leadership of the parish priest. The general assembly can be gathered only in the presence of the priest. The parish council (*kuratoria*) is to consist of no more than twelve people, and its head is to be the parish priest. The method of electing the council is not strictly prescribed—it is suggested that “the most democratic form” is a secret vote, with the names of all of the candidates submitted to every parishioner in advance. Apart from establishing that the head of the parish council is to be the priest, the eparchial center decided to add that “the elected curators should respect the parish priest (parish administrator⁸⁹), the dean, and higher church authorities. Disobedience, pushiness, and carelessness with regard to their responsibilities can lead to their removal from the parish council.” The head of the parish council (that is, the priest) is to represent the parish before both

⁸⁷ *Dushpastyr*, 1924, 9: 444.

⁸⁸ MGCE Bishops’ Decree of March 11, 2011.

⁸⁹ There is a difference between a parish rector (*parokh*) and a parish administrator, which is important with regard to the relationship between a given priest and his bishop. The *parokh* is nominated to serve in a given parish and can be removed against his will only according to a complex procedure. If a bishop wants to remove a *parokh* from his appointment, the latter also has the right to present his case before the church court. The parish administrator, on the other hand, can be removed at the discretion of the bishop, who does not have to provide grounds for his decision. From the point of view of the parishioners, this is not of crucial importance as they have other means of influencing the bishop if they want to keep or remove a given priest. However, from the point of view of the priests, the status of *parokh* is of crucial importance, as it gives him and his family security and the chance to make long-term plans involving his spouse’s occupation, his children’s education, property ownership, and so on.

ecclesiastical and secular authorities and has the right to appoint a curator as his deputy, if necessary. All documents must be signed by the parish priest, who also wields the parish stamp (without which no document is valid). The work of the parish council is to be monitored by a three-person commission and by the eparchial bishop.

This document, however, does not have any legal authority; therefore, parishioners can only be asked voluntarily to structure the workings of the parish in this way. I talked to many priests, curators, and other active parishioners about these suggestions. The question of who is actually viewed as the parish council head or the head of the parish community in the statutes was deemed important, but virtually all of my interlocutors paid more attention to the practicalities of parish management such as who has the parish stamp, who has the keys to the church, and who is in charge of bookkeeping. I have the impression that even in parishes where the spiritual guidance of the priest is fully accepted as well as his right or even obligation to comment on the morality of parishioners, financial matters are still very much a point of dispute. I talked, for example, to the curator of one relatively affluent village where the local priest is very much respected and where his suggestions concerning changes in the religious traditions of the village are well received and often accepted. However, the same curator, while discussing with me the reforms advocated by the eparchial center, said, "People here will never grant a priest access to the finances. A priest can never tell a curator what to do—what to build, what to paint, how the church should be decorated. The priest is our employee: 'We pay you, so serve us and do not get involved in our matters.'"

The Greek Catholic eparchial authorities have tried to reestablish the organizational structures of the church, with the shaping of parish life being one of the most important strategies to this end. The relationship between parishioners and their parish priest is, in my opinion, the most important mechanism through which the attitudes of church members toward the church as an organization are shaped. Other such mechanisms initiated at the diocesan level include the organization of pilgrimage centers (*see* Halemba 2014), youth work, public relations activities and visitations of the bishop, the distribution of materials for self-study, and various forms of catechization, including the recent development of the Neo-Catechumenal Movement (*see* Ch. 5). However, the parish is still the most important arena in which the religious life of contemporary Transcarpathia takes place and where attitudes toward the church as an organization are shaped.

As I have already said, although my research focused on Greek Catholics, I never missed an opportunity to talk to Orthodox priests and laypeople as well, and I lived in an Orthodox village for several months. I cannot claim to have conducted any systematic research among the Orthodox population, but, in general, I can say that the problems faced by Orthodox priests are similar. Father Ivan Shandra, my most helpful and open Orthodox interlocutor, always ready to explain and discuss with me questions of faith and religious practice as well as church politics, published an article entitled “The Most Orthodox among the Orthodox” (*Naipravoslavnyshi iz pravoslavnykh*) in 2009.⁹⁰ He points out that the members of the councils of many parishes try to have a decisive voice in matters of religious life, tell the parish priest what to do, and, should he not agree, threaten him with removal. The same people, according to Father Ivan, also criticize higher church authorities, thereby constructing the clergy as “a group separate from the Orthodox ‘mass’ that has to be taught how to live according to ‘Orthodox’ (i.e., their) rules.” In a discussion with me, he acknowledged that decision making in the Orthodox Church should be seen as having a more conciliar character than in the Catholic Church, as the Orthodox Church Council (*pomesntyi sobor*) includes both clergy and laity, and has a decisive voice in important church matters. He was quick to point out, however, that in everyday practice (that is, the great majority of the time when the council is not in session) the Orthodox Church has to be run in accordance with strictly hierarchical procedures, acknowledging that the hierarchy is actually as important to the management of everyday Orthodoxy as it is to the management of everyday Catholicism. He also gave examples of his own discussions with the Transcarpathian faithful about religious authority, that were not much different from those mentioned by Catholic priests.

Clerical Strategies of Negotiation over Authority and its Legitimation

The more priests I met, the more I talked with them, and especially the more time I spent with them as a guest in their private homes, during pilgrimages, in the seminary, and during deanery meetings, the more I admired the

⁹⁰ Available since 2010 at <http://2010.orthodoxy.org.ua/node/10527> (accessed on December 3, 2013).

complexity and difficulty of the bishop's work. He has to supervise, administer and lead such a diverse assemblage of people, each with his own personal history and priorities, family situation, and, above all, his own vision of his role as a clergyman. This diversity of personalities is compounded by the fact that the priests are sent out to work in various parishes where there is a wide range of attitudes toward them as representatives of the organizational church. The question of whether the priests are actually in a position of authority in the Weberian sense is a difficult one to answer. Are their instructions likely to be obeyed? Certainly not always, even in situations where, in the eyes of the church hierarchy, there should be no doubt about who is in charge.

Catholic priests are, according to Max Weber, a prime example of authority legitimated through the charisma of the office (1968). The church is understood here as an organizational dispenser of mystical power, in other words, as a charismatic bureaucracy where authority is legitimated through the mystical forces administered through hierarchical organizational channels (Constas 1958). In the official doctrine of the Catholic Church there is a peculiar, somehow contradictory relationship between the sacramental priesthood and the particular person who is ordained.⁹¹ While, on the one hand, the gifts of the Holy Spirit related to ordination are given to a person permanently, on the other hand, they remain separate from the person in question. Canon 394 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Catholic Churches states that "after it has been validly received, sacred ordination never becomes invalid." The church, bestowing the gifts of priesthood upon a particular person, endows this person with access to specific and exclusive means of contact with the sacred. At the same time, however, these gifts are separated from the other characteristics of the person in question (Weber 1978: 1141). This means that whatever the person does in his future life, the gifts of priesthood stay with him. He can be, because of gravely improper conduct, forbidden from conducting public rites of worship, and as a result cannot conduct liturgies, take confessions, or distribute the Eucharist under normal circumstances. However, even in such a case, he would not be regarded as a layperson and could still serve a dying person as a priest when no other member of clergy is available.

On the other hand, however, it is clear that the charisma that is bequeathed upon a priest does not belong to him as a person but to Christ. The Catechism

⁹¹ This is not dissimilar to other sacraments of the Catholic Church, which are also inalienable once conferred (baptism, confirmation, matrimony, etc.); still, those other sacraments are not supposed to place a person in a position of authority.

of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1584 states, "Since it is ultimately Christ who acts and effects salvation through the ordained minister, the unworthiness of the latter does not prevent Christ from acting." According to Weber, the fact that the special powers of a priest are separated from his other characteristics resulted in a situation in which "the priest could be absolutely deprived without endangering thereby his charismatic qualification" (Weber 1978: 1141). In this way, the charisma of the office is strictly separated from the given person, although it is through admittance to the office that the special qualities are in fact given to the person in this indelible way. For Weber, the Catholic Church is an example of the radical view of the charisma of the office, in which the gifts are completely depersonalized but at the same time appear as if they were qualities of a given person. Discussions about anticlericalism are often built around this switch between personal qualities and organizational legitimation. The critique of the behavior of priests is one of the most widespread arguments in popular anticlerical debates, where it means neither rejection of the church as an organization nor of religion as a social institution (Badone 1990a; Behar 1990; Brettell 1990; Pina-Cabral 1986; Riegelhaupt 1984). These discussions do not entail, however (contrary to Badone's interpretation, *see* 1990b: 13), the rejection of routinized charisma. On the contrary, anticlerical discourse undertaken without a call for radical reforms (such as abandonment of the priesthood altogether) is actually an indication of full embracement of the charisma of office, in that a particular office holder (or even all of them) can be criticized without questioning the special role they have through their office and related holy gifts.

A tension is also created by the fact that priests are conferred with sacred power in the service of the faithful, but are still no different from ordinary people. A common saying in Transcarpathia is, "A priest is a priest when he has his liturgical vestments on." Most of the priests I talked to, whether Greek Catholic or Orthodox, told me that this common conception represents a mistaken understanding. A priest is always a priest, not only when he stands at the altar. They also pointed out, however, that priests are like everyone else—they can make mistakes, they have problems and worries, and one can treat them as one would any other fellow villager. They emphasized that the respect people show a priest should not be understood as respect for him, but for his Holy Orders. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with overtly submissive behavior such as kissing a bishop's or even a priest's hand. One priest complained to me that he finds his position quite arduous. He is respected

and his opinion is always heeded, but it is in fact this respect that has led to his social isolation—he is not invited into homes for coffee, and people would rather bring him food at his parsonage (where he lives alone, while his family resides in another village) than invite him to dinner. While the position of priests is clearly a replication of the status of Christ, who was simultaneously God and human, it is further complicated by the fact that the involved charisma is officially a characteristic of the office and not of any particular person (as it was in the case of Christ). In principle, then, this respect and submission are due to the office and not to the person, even as they are clearly mediated through the body of the priest. As Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw wrote with regard to ritual action (1994) and Stanley Tambiah with reference to ritual language (1968), the fact that something is perceived both as external and internal to a person contributes to the perception of its power. On the other hand, both ritual language and ritual action lose their powerful aura outside the ritual context, where they become ordinary actions and words. Does the same happen with priests? The problem with priests is that they, people living normal lives with their families, are nevertheless also carriers of powerful gifts. Is a priest without liturgical vestments still a priest? In other words, do the gifts of priesthood remain with him outside the ritual context?

With this in mind, it is interesting to note that there is a parallel in Transcarpathia between the attitudes of people toward monks and toward underground priests. The best remembered underground priests were either monks or celibate priests. They are also remembered as living highly ascetic lives. Although they were in fact quite approachable and lived in villages as well, their living quarters could, in my opinion, be described as similar to monasteries. It can indeed be said that people in Transcarpathia perceive monks as living the totality of their lives in a religious context, so their charismatic status outside of such a context cannot be called into question.⁹² The monasteries are seen as extremely important places for the sustenance of spirituality, morality, and

⁹² There have been discussions concerning the behavior and lifestyle of Basilian monks in Transcarpathia. They tend to negotiate the establishment of parishes with the diocesan authorities, or at least to emulate parish life in their monasteries. They also get involved in activities outside the walls of their monasteries. Their activism is met with mixed feelings by the local people, who regard it as a challenge to their monastic callings. People in general prefer to attend those monasteries where monks live lives of prayer and contemplation without ever leaving the religious context (and in Transcarpathia those are mainly Orthodox monasteries).

faith, as places in which one can gather strength for everyday life, in which one can reflect on higher moral values and on the meaning of life. The monks are responsible for spirituality through their prayers, and engage as little as possible with everyday problems and conflicts. The position of the underground priests was similar—they were the highest moral authorities and were respected and protected by people, but were not present in people's day-to-day lives. The underground priests were powerful persons with extraordinary qualities, but their lives are now remembered as having been fully played out in a religious context, so there was no need to distinguish between the charisma of their office and the charisma of their person.

For parish priests today, however, the simple fact of their ordination, and therefore the legitimation of their authority through the charisma of their office, is not sufficient to secure their position in their villages. They thus have to use a variety of additional strategies to establish authority in their parishes. Almost all of the priests with whom I talked were enthusiastic and committed to their work; nevertheless, both laypeople and even some priests sometimes talked about priests who treated their activity not as a vocation but as a profession—not as something to which they were called by God, but as a mere career choice, a way to earn a living. However, I met very few priests who gave me that feeling. An overwhelming majority of my priest interlocutors were devoted to bringing into being their own visions of religious life, however divergent their visions may be. They were also devoted to securing the position of the Catholic Church as the organization that, according to them, is best suited to bringing about the salvation of their parishioners.

William Christian (1996: 217) writes that “except when the clergy is of a different caste or race, we are unlikely to find sharp divergence between their thinking and that of the laity.” He adds that this is especially true for some Catholic areas that produce their own clergy, generation after generation. This condition pertains to Transcarpathia, where priests are married and there are even priestly clans (*sviashchennicheski klany*), where sons follow their fathers into the priesthood and daughters marry priests from other priestly families. In 2011, only one priest in the Irshava Deanery was not of local origin, that is, born outside Transcarpathia, and most were born in the deanery or neighboring villages. However, the years priests spend in various educational establishments substantially influence their perception of their role as clergymen and of the church as an organization. There is a difference between the priests educated in Rome, Uzhhorod, L'viv, Ternopil', or in Poland,

Germany, and Hungary—all educational destinations for today's MGCE. Some priests were also educated, after relatively short periods of group study, under individual guidance in the underground and in the first years after relegalization. Their education definitely influences the ways in which they deal with problems in their parishes. Below, I present some of the strategies Transcarpathian priests employ to supplement the charisma of their office with other means of legitimating their authority. Although during the period of my research, each of the priests described below applied a main strategy, as outlined here, to his parish work, they all employed other strategies as well, changing and adapting strategies in response to their changing situations and experiences.

Networking as a member of the local elite

Some of the priests I talked to admitted that one of the most important actions they had to undertake at a new parish was to attempt to influence the election of the main curator and other members of the council in order to wield some influence over decisions. Probably no one was as successful at this as Father Andrii who, at the time of our first conversation, had already served his present parish for nine years. Shortly after his appointment, he managed to replace the old church council with one that he led in practice. This is how he saw his place in the village:

There are parish communities [*hromady*] that *de jure* already have a priest as their head and which are officially subordinate to the bishop, but in practice no one in those parishes regards the priest as the head. And there are such parishes where it is regarded as sacred law that the priest is the head of everything. For example, I have not changed the official statute of my parish yet. Everything is as it was on paper. If you look at the reality, however, even the head of our village was not elected without the priest's support and even his decision. My head curator, that is, the person I appointed as curator,⁹³ has now become the head of the village. Do you understand?... Let's take the school director. I am a priest, what kind of relationship do I have with a school director? None. It is not my business if he is appointed or not. Nevertheless....

⁹³ Note that he officially has no right to appoint a curator.

Or candidates to be our delegate to the regional parliament: "Father, is he worthy to become a delegate? Should we support him or not?" And if I say in church that we should all work for Peter, then 95 percent of the village will work for Peter [vote for him]. That is all. Well, this can appear from one point of view as some kind of oligarchic structure—I can understand this point of view. But it is not as it seems. Because if there were such a structure, it would mean that I would have some way to keep the people obedient. It could be fear or it could be by buying everyone. I cannot frighten them—I have nothing to frighten them with. I have nothing to bribe them with because even my own car was bought on credit. Please understand....This is not my own achievement; this is the work of priests and respect for priests that the people have been raised to have for centuries. They knew that a village has to sustain a priest—that if one has milk, one has to share it readily with the priest. They knew that if they had some spare time, they should go and help the priest with his garden. And they were brought up like this from grandmother to granddaughter.

Father Andrii presents his involvement in local politics not as a conscious strategy of managing his position in the village, but as a restoration of how village life used to be before the Soviet era and associated reforms of parish life. In his opinion, the very fact of being a church official should legitimate the authority of a parish priest. What can seem from one perspective to be the effective creation of a network of support for his personal use actually reflects the repositioning of the office of the parish priest within a network of other powerful social and organizational positions in the village, including local council chiefs, school directors, successful entrepreneurs, doctors, and so on. According to him, such a position is due to priests by default, despite current legal regulations that subordinate priests to their local communities. This status should be self-evident and independent of any characteristics of particular priests, although their behavior can obviously make sustaining such a position difficult in practice. The employment of a village priest and payment for his service should not elevate the parishioners or the parish council to a position of power, but should be seen as an obligation of parishioners to the church. Father Andrii views priests not as employees of their communities, but as respected leaders that the people are obliged to sustain materially.

Father Andrii serves one of the villages whose conversion to Orthodoxy in 1949 and return to Greek Catholicism in 1990 were undertaken relatively

peacefully, quietly, and without much discussion. Underground priests had never been active there. Moreover, the previous parish priest had served there for more than fifty years, originally as a Greek Catholic then as an Orthodox and then again as a Greek Catholic priest—a situation rather unusual in Transcarpathia. Father Andrii attributes the fact that respect for the priestly office survived throughout the Soviet period in part due to the personal qualities of his predecessor. He describes him as an educated man, always well-dressed and well-mannered, always ready to fulfill his duties. Despite all this, Father Andrii's tenure began with problems with the local parish council because his predecessor had not looked deeply enough into financial matters. Shortly after his appointment, therefore, Father Andrii decided to change the entire council. Although he could not in fact do this formally—councils are supposed to be elected by the parish members—such formal elections are rarely held in practice. Parish councils are usually formed as the result of informal talks and negotiations, and only presented as a single body to the parishioners for their final approval. Although Father Andrii presents his activities as if they were the direct outcome of his parishioners' wishes, he is widely known in the region as a priest who managed to shape local politics. His authority is based on a network of supporters within the local structures of administrative and financial power.

This does not, however, mean that he in any way neglects his obligations as a priest either in his own eyes or in the eyes of many of his parishioners. He still sees himself as a good shepherd, serving the church as a community of believers, as an organization, and as the mystical body of Christ. He concentrates on work with young people, organizing not only their catechization but also football games and other sports. Like virtually all of the priests I met and observed, he genuinely considered his methods of negotiating his position in the village to be beneficial, honest, and true to the communal, organizational, and mystical church.

Negotiating one's financial independence can also be seen as part of this strategy to create a place for the priest within the network of powerful and important local figures. As explained above, priests are paid by their local parishes. Their salaries are negotiated with the local councils and vary greatly: the basic salaries of the village priests where I worked could be anywhere from 500 to 2500 Ukrainian hryvnias per month,⁹⁴ and the amount of additional money that the priests could earn also varied greatly. For example, some villages

⁹⁴ At the time of my fieldwork, 1 EUR = c. 9 UAH.

combine all the offerings made at services, baptisms, and weddings into the common church fund, from which priests may obtain a bonus, while other, usually more affluent, villages treat such offerings as legitimate additional earnings of the priest. As priests are now usually appointed as administrators and not as rectors of their parishes, and can therefore readily be transferred from one village to another by the bishop (including to parishes that can only provide a much lower income), many priests deem it necessary to secure an additional source of income for their families. One has to remember that an overwhelming majority of Greek Catholic priests are married and are thus financially responsible not only for themselves. The issue of priests generating income outside their primary obligations to their local communities is often a matter of debate summarized by the question, "Must a priest feed himself from the altar only?"

In one of the more affluent villages of the Irshava Deanery, this question has been answered thus far with a clear affirmative. The members of the parish council, who in this particular village reserve for themselves complete decision-making power in church-related issues, see the provision of an adequate salary for their priest as their prime obligation. However, they are only willing to accept and sustain a priest who matches their expectations. These expectations are close to the ideal expressed above by Father Andrii: a priest should be a member of the local elite and a person who can represent the religious community and earn respect for it in the eyes of other communities and other denominations. The previous head of the parish council told me that, during his period of service in the 1980s, when this parish still officially belonged to the Orthodox Church and the old priest serving there had to leave the parish for health reasons, it took a few years before a new priest could establish himself in the village. The Orthodox eparchy began sending them one priest after another, but none of them met their requirements for a variety of reasons—they spent too much time outside the village and could not be easily contacted when needed, or they expected the local people to take care of their personal household affairs, or their financial demands were too high, or they were judged to be intellectually inadequate and therefore incapable of representing the village. They ultimately found a fully satisfactory priest only following the re-legalization of the Greek Catholic Church, when the parish returned to Catholicism. From the point of view of the members of the present parish council, the current priest is indeed given great respect and they ask him for advice and listen to him if he has suggestions on the ways in which the parish

is to be run, and they take care of all his material needs in return. They see him as part of the region's intellectual elite. However, this priest in fact sees himself as following what I call below a "strategy of withdrawal," described in the next section.

On the whole, the question of the relationship between priests and local networks of power is controversial. Even if it is generally seen as a good thing that the priest is a member of local intellectual elite, the links between the clergy, local officials, and businessmen are kept under close scrutiny. The relationship between the clergy and finances is seen as particularly controversial. In more affluent villages, people usually expect the priesthood to be the priest's only source of income, and try to pay him adequately. If such a priest decides to get involved in other forms of business (selling wine and importing cars are real-life examples), it is met with displeasure and can lead to the removal of the priest from the village. In poorer villages, people understand that priests have to earn money externally in order to sustain their families. The external occupations of such priests can be divided into three groups: agriculture (mainly growing vegetables for sale), business, and special religious services. While the first type of occupation is generally accepted in poorer villages, the second one is met with suspicion. The third one concerns mainly a small group of priests that I describe below in the section on charisma as a legitimization strategy.

Withdrawal—remaining aloof

Some of the priests I interviewed expressed a conflict avoidance strategy that I provisionally called during fieldwork "do not touch," after one of the priests told me, in reference to his parishioners, "I try not to touch them" (*starayiusia ikh ne trogaty*). For these priests one main feature of their work was carrying out subtle negotiations with parishioners, a sort of continual dance performed around issues of authority, denominational belonging, congregational unity, and the shape of religious life. All of these priests worked in villages where the communities of locals participating in underground services were small to nonexistent, but this was practically the only characteristic that linked them. Among them there were villages belonging exclusively to the Greek Catholic Church, and others that also had Orthodox communities or perhaps Baptists or Adventists. Of the villages, some were small and some large, some poor and some rich, and some situated next to main roads and some relatively isolated.

What they all did have in common was an especially strong opinion among their inhabitants that they were the ones who should be shaping religious life. In such a situation, the position of village priest was very clearly linked to the priest's personal characteristics and his skills at convincing the parishioners that he was the right one for them and that he would be able to satisfy their particular needs.

One of these priests managed to stay in his village for an admirable span of twenty years. It is in fact quite rare for a priest to stay in one village for such a long time in contemporary Greek Catholic parishes in Transcarpathia. As he explained to me:

You know, there is a big difference between those communities that took part in underground life and those that did not. Those that took part were less numerous. And yet they were the people who really were looking for salvation and God....For example, those underground believers (*virniki*) had a special attitude toward priests, understanding that one has to approach a priest to benefit from the gifts that he was given by Jesus Christ. A priest is God's emissary. And the other believers [who were not in the underground church] see it like this: He is ours; he has to do as we want.

Later he continued:

I think about myself: What have I done during those twenty years to make our believers more conscious? And you know what? I have nothing to brag about. I have done very poorly. They come to me, but I do not attempt to moralize constantly. They want to be praised and stroked, and I am expected to tell them that they are special.

All of the priests who told me that their strategy was to avoid conflict with their parishioners were painfully aware that their approach was far from the ideal of the priest as the leader of a local community of believers. They are not in a position of authority in Max Weber's sense, that is, their directives are not likely to be obeyed. But their diplomatic skills were able to contribute to securing the adherence of their local community to the Greek Catholic Church, which, for them, is a very worthy goal.

In May 2007 I took part in a monthly meeting of the Greek Catholic priests working within the territory of the Irshava Deanery, at which one of the most

heated discussions concerned the funerals of individuals who had committed suicide (*see also* Halemba 2007). The issue was introduced by one of the priests who had recently faced serious disagreement on this matter in his parish. In short, most of his parishioners regarded death by suicide as a serious sin and protested when the priest wanted to bury a person who had killed himself in exactly the same way as everybody else, which is at present the official position of the Catholic Church. His colleagues defended their diverse opinions on the matter with vigor. Some suggested slightly modifying the funeral service to mark a difference; others said that they should stick to the stance of the Catholic Church and provide the standard funeral rite. Yet others protested that this would demoralize the people, as they think of suicide as an unforgivable sin. They could then actually turn against their priest and, in the worst case scenario, turn to an Orthodox priest, who would undoubtedly do everything to please the people and thus perhaps win over new parishioners. This last type of argumentation is based on the assumption that keeping parishioners within the Catholic Church is the most important task because only the Catholic Church truly follows the apostolic succession.

In this and similar situations, some priests, as representatives of a powerful religious organization, know that the charisma of their office does not legitimate their authority. In order to secure his stay in a parish and, in some cases, even the presence of the Catholic Church in the given village, a priest has to engage in strategies that are usually not associated with a position of power, but are rather regarded as weapons of the weak (Scott 1985): subtle negotiations, half-truths, small changes introduced over longer timespans, and, above all, concessions to local traditions even if they are not in line with the policies and orders of the Vatican or the eparchial center. Most of them, however, see their own pastoral work as wanting. The way in which they shape their parish work stems from the need to keep people within a given organizational framework. In the Irshava Deanery, I met four parish priests who admitted to following this strategy. Interestingly, three of them were educated and ordained in the late 1980s (underground) and one entered a seminary in 1990, encouraged by his uncle, a devoted Greek Catholic, who convinced him that the newly re-legalized church was in need of priests. For all of them, the underground Catholic life was a lived reality, as was the process of reestablishing the Greek Catholic Church as an organization. They saw their task as ensuring the survival of a once persecuted religious organization, even if they understood that the work of a priest should ideally be quite different, according to the standards

set by famous underground priests. In one village, a priest told me that he actually doubted if his parishioners knew that they were Catholics, as he consciously refrained from underlining the differences between the Orthodox and Catholic churches. This was not because the difference was not important to him—on the contrary, he was ordained underground himself and never went to the Orthodox Church. Still, in this particular village, organizational adherence was relatively unimportant to the people and he was afraid that trying to raise their Catholic consciousness could in fact alienate them from the Catholic Church.

Caring for the flock and deepening the faith

The strategy of conflict avoidance described above is often criticized by those priests who were educated from the mid-1990s onward either in Uzhhorod, in Galician seminaries, or abroad. They present a diversity of approaches to pastoral work, but they seem to agree that there can be no compromise with regard to what they see as the main task of a parish priest, which is contributing to the real spiritual growth of their parishioners. As one of them told me:

Those who were in the underground church, a handful of people, have still not left the catacombs. They are still underground in their consciousness. They think that all the circumstances of that time are still in place—the attitude to authorities, to people, to the word “orthodox” (*pravoslavny*)⁹⁵ in the liturgy, and to the Orthodox Church.

In this priest’s opinion, although conflicts with the Orthodox Church are indeed an important part of the religious and political lives of Catholics in Transcarpathia, the fear of Orthodoxy and the defense of the Catholic Church as an organization cannot overwhelm the most important goals of pastoral service, which are catechization, evangelization, and deepening the faith of the flock. A priest should not simply work toward remaining in his village, but to direct and influence the religious lives of his parishioners. When parishioners support

⁹⁵ This word is a standard part of the Greek Catholic liturgy, but even now some Catholic priests, wanting to avoid any association with the Orthodox Church, choose either to omit it or to replace it with the word *pravovirny*, which can be regarded as a synonym. In principle, however, such changes in the liturgy are not allowed.

a local tradition that, as in the case of funerals after a suicide, contradicts the official regulations of the Catholic Church, the priest's task is not to avoid conflict, but to make people understand why as Catholics they should follow the directions of the church and why those directions make sense. It involves explaining to people beforehand that they belong to a Catholic Church that cannot be reduced to the local community, but is a global, hierarchical structure, differing in important ways from other organizational options. People have to know that they are Catholics.

In my opinion, the activities of such priests tend to change the local religious landscape and widen (or create) a division with Orthodoxy. They break through what Naumescu (2008a) called the "Orthodox imaginary," not only by explaining to people directly that there are crucial organizational and doctrinal differences between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, but, much more importantly, by reshaping religious praxis through the introduction of new elements that they consider beneficial to the religious lives of their parishioners. In their efforts to improve the spiritual well-being of their parishioners, these priests use techniques borrowed from Roman Catholic, or indirectly from Protestant, practices, such as new types of prayer groups, catechization techniques, and the Neo-Catechumenal Movement. I return to those issues in the next chapter, where I analyze in more detail the significance of unity for Transcarpathians and the practices that break this unity. I reflect here only on the ways in which such priests try to legitimate their authority in order to enable them to undertake actions that, in their opinion, help the souls of their parishioners.

In general, they acknowledge that the charisma of the office does not always legitimate authority in the eyes of Transcarpathian parishioners. This makes them very different from the "networking priests," who believe that the position in the village should be a function of respect toward the priestly office. The priests I describe in the present section think that authority has to be established by each individual priest. In interviews, they often refer to the biographies of the underground priests, showing that each of them established his own authority through his own deeds. As one of them put it:

Please try to imagine that a priest serves in a given parish for only two years. This could be me, or it could be another priest, it does not matter. People will just say later, "Oh yes, we did have such a priest, then there was another one and that is it." But this priest, Father Petro Oros, served here for just two years

and you can still see his picture in almost every house, even now. Why is this so? Why have people remembered him for so many years? The Apostle Paul says, “Faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.” There will be a time when faith is no more: it will be inadequate as we will see the truth with our own eyes. Your hope will be fulfilled. But love will stay forever. This is the most important—love will stay forever. And he [Petro Oros] had a loving heart and therefore remains in the people’s memory forever. (July 2011)

According to this priest, people followed Petro Oros and his advice because he loved and cared for them. Love and care thus form the first avenue of legitimation that they consciously pursue in their parishes. They are convinced that if they really engage with their parishioners at an individual level, the parishioners will listen to them. It is interesting how they approach, for example, the matter of praying over people (*molytva nad ludmi*), which is actually the most important activity for the next group of priests I describe, the charismatic priests. For example, at the end of the monthly First Saturday prayers, when the most active believers of the Irshava Deanery meet in one village church and participate in a liturgy and prayers led by all the priests together, the priests form a line and each person can come and receive a personal blessing from every priest. One of these “caring priests” told me that he prays over all of the people, but that he waits especially for his own parishioners to come forward to pray for them in particular. This is because he knows them well and instead of praying in a general way, he can pray for their particular needs. This is a particular moment in which he can express his love for his people and care for them in a special way. The “charismatic priests” talked about these prayers over people in a different way, concentrating more on their efficacy in the battle between God and Satan.

Caring for people does not necessarily mean following their wishes, but leading them instead. A priest is responsible for the people and therefore has to show them a path to salvation. As one of the priests said in a joking manner, “A priest should be a shepherd not a herder” (*sviashchennyk—pastyr ne pastukh*). In Ukrainian, the first term denotes providing care and guidance, while the second one is associated more with maintaining order and carries a slightly derogative connotation. Priests such as these try to find a balance between the innovations suggested by the eparchial center and their own assessment of the needs of their parishioners. If they deem it necessary, however, they can also be very bold in carrying out their ideas, as in the case

of Father Ivan (discussed at the beginning of the section “Who’s in Charge?”), who managed to convince his parishioners that they should not make changes to the liturgical schedule without his consent.

The second part of the priests’ approach to legitimating their authority involves education. These priests are usually avid catechists, investing time into work with children and distributing literature, and are interested in additional training for themselves. At the same time, they often have quite clear views on particular aspects of religious life, even as they eagerly look for new sources of inspiration. This search for new techniques to assist in the salvation of souls can lead them in divergent directions: some search for innovative techniques known from the Roman Catholic Church, while others prefer to adapt Byzantine traditions to local needs. If they are convinced that a religious practice would be beneficial, they are likely to put a lot of effort into convincing the parishioners to accept it. This also involves changing well-established local traditions that have clear social implications. For example, most of the Greek Catholic churches have numbered pews. Each number is assigned to a particular person, who pays a yearly fee for the right to sit there in church (*za stilets*). Those seats are also inherited, and elderly people often indicate who should be the heir to their seats. There are fewer seats than parishioners, however, so that not everyone has a seat. Sometimes seats are paid for by people who no longer even live in the village or who spend a great deal of time working abroad. Even when such a person is absent, no one else will sit in his seat because it is not theirs to occupy, and if the person were to appear in church and his place were taken, he could ask the occupier to leave, which would put everyone in an awkward position. The “caring priests” are actually against this practice because, according to them, it creates unnecessary conflicts and divisions. While the priests are aware that, for many people, having “their seat” that was occupied by members of their family for generations is an important matter of pride and attachment, they do not shy away from trying to explain that there are good reasons to abandon the practice. One priest who strongly felt that paying *za stilets* created unnecessary divisions within his parish took even more drastic measures. He managed to convince the local council that they needed new pews, and when they arrived he convinced people to refrain from painting numbers on them and thus “spoiling them.” In doing so, he managed to get parishioners to abandon the system of numbered seats, and they stopped paying *za stilets*.

Charisma—freeing the people from suffering

The night prayers at Father Petro's village church carry on long after the lights of churches in other villages have been turned off. Not all of the people praying on their knees and singing at the church, however, belong to the local parish. On the contrary, most of them are from other villages and towns, and some even from other parts of Ukraine, and one woman even came from Kyiv. Many of them are not there for the first time. They come to confess to Father Petro and in many cases also to ask him to pray over them. Father Petro, apart from fulfilling the usual obligations of a parish priest, invests his time in promoting a specific type of religiosity based on a combination of strict discipline and heightened emotional involvement. He recommends frequent prayer and regular, preferably daily, confessions, and is fervently devoted to the apparitions of the Virgin Mary around the world. He frequently prays over people (*molytsa nad ludmi*) to help them to overcome illnesses and other problems, which he views as the work of Satan.

There are two priests in the Irshava Deanery who apply their personal charisma as a strategy of legitimating their authority. One of them is the above-mentioned Father Petro, the father of one of the visionaries from Dzhublyk; the other is a young thirty-year-old priest who only recently gained renown for the power of his prayers. From the point of view of those who come to them for help, they are the bearers of a personal charisma that sets them apart from other priests. Their prayers are more efficacious, confession to them runs deeper and is particularly purifying, and they can deal with matters that other priests either do not understand, are afraid of, or see as superstition. They not only take seriously people's concerns with the evils of witchcraft, black prayers (*cherna moltyva*—see below), and the intergenerational inheritance of sins, but also know how to deal with them. For these Catholic believers, the charismatic priests represent an alternative to Orthodox monks, who, thanks to their ascetic lifestyle, are considered to have special powers of prayer and healing.

However, the position of charismatic priests in their home villages is difficult. Unlike monks, these priests are not celibate. They have families, and live alongside their parishioners in the village. Their activities, which involve a direct struggle with Satan, are seen as dangerous, especially for the priest himself and his family. Moreover, the charismatic priests with whom

I talked⁹⁶ tend to see illness and misfortune as linked to morality. For example, genital cancer is seen as an outcome of sexual impurity. For this reason, they tend to be very critical of the people who come to them for help, often preach on morality, and are known for uttering harsh words concerning people's behavior. This is not always welcome in their parishes: going to a monastery or even traveling to see a priest in different village or district for advice and to receive a harsh lecture concerning one's morality is quite a different thing from being exposed to moralizing sermons by the priest living next door. The older of the two charismatic priests from the Irshava Deanery was asked to leave his previous parish for precisely this reason—apparently he was too harsh in his tirades against the moral behavior of the local people.

There is also the interesting question of the connection between the special practices of a given priest and his financial situation. As mentioned above, many parishioners are of the conviction that “a priest must feed himself from the altar only,” which also involves a certain skepticism regarding priests earning income not controlled by the parish council. While there is no fixed fee for special prayers and people do not have to leave an offering,⁹⁷ people do in practice pay charismatic priests in cash, services, or goods. For several years I was able to observe how one particular charismatic priest made regular requests for services (help with transport, computer work, printing, the distribution of prayer books) from a family that, due to the mother's grave illness, regularly availed themselves of his prayer services. Although it is commonly accepted that religious services have to be reciprocated, there is a certain doubt surrounding such issues, especially if “prayers over people” are thought to generate a considerable income from clients from other villages or regions. This becomes an issue of the cohesion of a local religious community versus the idea of priests establishing their position not with respect to their own parishioners, but as part of a larger network that reaches far beyond the limits of a local village.

Having a charismatic priest in a village would indeed seem to change the dynamics of parish life. Although, on the one hand, charismatic priests see

⁹⁶ I also lived for more than a month in the home of one of these priests and traveled with him and a group of pilgrims to Medjugorje in 2008 (Halemba 2011).

⁹⁷ In many villages there is an official fee (*taksa*) for various regular religious services such as specially requested liturgies, baptisms, funerals, and weddings. Interestingly, the “caring priests” usually try to convince the parishioners to abandon the official fees, and will only accept voluntary offerings.

themselves as an alternative to the involvement of local people with Orthodox monks, on the other hand, their practices also tend to extend beyond parish borders. For one thing, the fact that their seminary training does not touch much on matters of possession and demonology compels them to look for materials and contacts beyond the borders of the eparchy. They take part in meetings and courses organized in other parts of Ukraine, as well as abroad. Poland, with its regular meetings of exorcists, is a particularly popular destination. They seek out relevant literature and thus often become acquainted with places of special significance for the type of religiosity in which individual suffering is recast as a cosmic struggle between good and evil, as is characteristic of the modern apparition worldview (Zimdars-Swartz 1991). Of course, charismatic priests also care for their parishioners; in this regard, they believe that keeping Satan away is the most important task of a priest, and they do their best to achieve this goal. Nevertheless, their approach to being present in their parish is very different from those described in previous sections. While the other types of priests establish and legitimate their place in the village internally in relation to the parishioners, the charismatic priests' authority is founded with reference to external resources. If they are accepted as priests, they are accepted not primarily because they situate themselves within the local community, but with reference to the external world: the people who come to seek their advice, the sacred places that they talk about and to which they organize pilgrimages, and the knowledge that they derive from their readings and travels.

I discussed the issue of charismatic priests working as parish priests with the officially appointed exorcist of the MGCE. He is a Franciscan monk, born and educated in Polish Silesia, and a bi-ritualist providing both the Latin and Byzantine liturgies. In his opinion, an exorcist is an expert who deals with the most difficult cases involving actual possession. All other cases can be dealt with by ordinary priests, if their faith is as strong as it should be. If the faith is strong, there is no need to be afraid to pray over people—it is a matter of trust and faith that Christ is stronger than any evil force. And yet many people and priests are still afraid. This is again a matter of a lack of education and preparation on the part of both priests and laity. On the one hand, people in Transcarpathia, according to the Franciscan monk, do perceive evil forces in concrete forms—there are actual evil spirits residing in various places (for example, at crossroads, in bathhouses, near borders) that can attack people or, even more often, be induced to attack them through spells and witchcraft. On

the other hand, despite the insistence of the official doctrine of the church that Satan exists as a real person, a metaphorical understanding of evil has dominated in the practical theology of the Catholic Church, at least until recently. He said that, in seminary, there was practically no teaching on demonology or dealing with spells, witchcraft, or possession. Priests who want to deal with such matters are forced to learn about them on their own using whatever literature is available, in meetings with other exorcists, and from their own practice. On the other hand, he emphasized that the need for this type of spiritual help among the parishioners is growing and that, in principle, the power to help people in such cases is a part of the charisma of the office, bestowed upon every priest during ordination. In this sense, priests who go, in their practice, beyond simple blessings and pray over people with commitment and real concern are just fulfilling their standard priestly duties and obligations. Nevertheless, this kind of intense engagement frightens some priests. Parishioners generally view this dynamic from a different perspective. They believe that married parish priests are suitable for such activities only to a limited degree and that, generally speaking, monks or at least celibate priests are better suited to perform such services.

“Holy hustlers” is a term used by Richard Werbner (2011a,b) to describe the younger generation of charismatic healers in Botswana. Werbner claims that they are in an ambivalent position with regard to other members of the local community, a position that makes them simultaneously “dividuals” and individuals (Strathern 1988). On the one hand, they are not wholly autonomous, as their very selves are permeable—they feel the suffering of other people as if it were their own. At other moments, however, they are domineering, autonomous, self-seeking, and focused on their own interests. They hustle others for personal gain and are considered to be manipulative and greedy. They are seen as being under the attack of evil forces, and thus as sacrificing themselves for others. On the other hand, they are also seen as extracting money from their patients. This is very much the way in which the activities of charismatic parish priests are perceived in the Irshava Deanery. Father Petro unquestionably benefits from his activities in both financial and social terms. He receives money for his services and has created a network of supporters who can help him in situations of need. This fact is recognized by him, by the people who consult with him, and by other observers such as his own parishioners. All these parties, however, also recognize that Father Petro sacrifices himself for the people, placing himself and his family under attack by evil forces that must confront

the power of his prayers. He is also a “holy hustler” in another sense, in that he actively looks for people whom he can help. During my travels in his company, I repeatedly saw (and experienced myself) how he suggested to a person that he or she has a hidden, not yet recognized, physical malady that is actually caused by spiritual problems. The suggested solution was always a deep confession, Eucharist, and a prayer spoken by a priest. While the officially appointed exorcist of the MGCE told me clearly that most of the problems people encounter (including spells and witchcraft) can be remedied by lay-people themselves if they have real trust in Christ, charismatic parish priests insist that the direct guidance and prayer of a priest is absolutely necessary.

Fear of black prayer

In Max Weber’s understanding, authority based on fear is not legitimate, but is instead pure oppression and violence. All the Greek Catholic priests with whom I talked agreed with this view as well. Although they believed that fear could be used as a strategy to establish a priest’s position in the village, I have yet to meet a priest who would admit to using fear in this way. As in Favret-Saada’s (1980) approach to witchcraft, where one can encounter only the bewitched or unwitchers, but never a witch, talk about priests who threatened their parishioners with the so-called *cherny molytva* (“black prayer”) exists at the level of discourse, defining the social field of religion by dividing it into acceptable and unacceptable forms of religious authority. Among the priests with whom I talked, black prayers, that is, supplications pronounced with the aim of causing harm, are considered not only essentially unchristian and forbidden, but also something that is not actually a reality in ritual practice but rather a discursive strategy aimed at establishing the position of a given priest in a village. Without exception, the Greek Catholic priests with whom I spoke accused some (unnamed) Orthodox priests of threatening their parishioners with black prayer. This is apparently done in situations of grave conflict as, for example, when members of an Orthodox parish council consider transferring their community to the Catholic Church. Of course, no Orthodox priest has ever admitted to me that he had resorted to such measures, all stating instead that it would be unchristian and entirely off the mark to even consider praying for someone’s harm. Accusations of recourse to black prayer can be seen as a way of delineating limits to the establishment of priestly authority.

Nevertheless, although accusations of recourse to black prayer should be seen as a way of indicating what is permissible and what is not, with regard to Christian religion, it does not mean that spreading fear should generally be excluded from the set of methods used by priests to establish their position, even if authority achieved in this manner is not seen as legitimate. This technique is in fact present to some extent in the practice of some Greek Catholic charismatic priests. While they never say any black prayers directly, the way in which they talk about illnesses and the presence of evil spirits can clearly be seen as an attempt to induce fear in their interlocutors. Here, I can use my own self and body as an instrument of anthropological enquiry. On numerous occasions priests confronted me with visions of terrible illnesses and/or hell that I could only avoid through the appropriate prayers and rituals. Such prayers are usually not one-off events but require recurring sessions, thereby establishing a long-term healer-patient relationship. Although spreading fear can sometimes be observed in practice, accusations of inducing fear in parishioners are primarily used to mark off illegitimate, harmful, and immoral forms of authority. It is a strategy of discursive delegitimization.

Concluding Remarks

Nowadays, it cannot be as it was before, that a priest had a village in his clutches—there was once, before the war, a time when a clergyman stood above all the people. But now it is different, and you [a priest] should do what the people want if you want to stay in this village at all. And if not, we will find someone who will adhere to our rules.

—Young teacher from Transcarpathia, May 2007

Just because a person has been ordained a priest and appointed to a parish does not guarantee that people will readily listen to him. The charisma of the office is not enough to legitimate priestly authority in the eyes of parishioners. This is not only true for Transcarpathia or even for Ukraine. Ruth Behar (1990), in her article on the relationship between parishioners and priests in Spain, describes the attitude of the laity as “pious anticlericalism.” This entails both critique of the priests and rejection of their right to determine what is permitted and what is not in the religious field, while expressing both a need for religious ritual and for sound religious convictions. Behar points out that the laity and

the clergy differently put into practice the resolutions of the Second Vatican Council. The priests wanted to reform what they saw as backward elements of popular religiosity, such as attachment to strict ritual forms, while the laity questioned the very authority of the priests and their power over the sacraments, in particular, confession. Behar also points to the fact that parishioners in her area of research in Spain treated priests as they would anyone else without any special powers, and regarded the priesthood as a profession and a business. The priests' intrusion into the area of morality and the private lives of their parishioners was challenged, as could be seen, for example, in a very critical approach to and frequent rejection of the sacrament of confession (Behar 1990).

For Transcarpathia, however, such an assessment would be too simple. On the one hand, one of the most important consequences of the transformations that the religious field underwent during the socialist era was weakening the organizational church. On the other hand, I saw a high level of religiosity at the personal and social level in Transcarpathian villages. In all the time I spent in the Irshava Deanery, I met only one conscious atheist, and this was only after purposefully asking around and looking for such a person. Instead, I repeatedly observed and listened to people who readily interpreted their life experiences in religious terms and who saw the importance of religion as a social factor unifying the local community, in part through moral teachings. They needed religion to mark special occasions with rituals, and as a protector of morality and a community bond. They also saw the organizational church as a welcome part of their lives in terms of providing religious services, but did not necessarily see it as a source of regulating mechanisms. Institutionalized religion is important to them, and they see the organizational church as a resource that should provide for the smooth flow of religious social life by supplying trained religious specialists. These specialists, however, are not treated like everyone else. Many of my lay Greek Catholic interlocutors agreed that a priest should be treated as a special person not only when he wears his clerical vestments. As explained above, many people continue to cherish the image of the ideal priest based on the narratives of underground priests, and they say that they would prefer to have priests who treat what they do as a calling, and not merely as a profession.

In July 2008, I went on a bus pilgrimage to Lourdes organized for young adults by the MGCE. One of my reasons for undertaking this trip was to have a chance to look more closely at the interactions between laity and clergy—the bus pilgrimage, physically demanding and strenuous (we slept in the bus several

nights in a row), provided numerous opportunities to see how young people treat priests and how priests position themselves with respect to them. There were two priests with us, accompanied by their wives, but only one of them was delegated by the eparchy and acted as the organizer and guide for the trip. The other priest was officially a pilgrim like the rest of us. There were many moments of potential conflict during the trip, but it soon became clear that the priests had a privileged position (in terms of comfort of travel, tolerance for their tardiness, and their role in deciding our schedule), and that this position was accepted by the young people on the bus simply because they were priests. I had the impression, during the trip, that the exceptionality of the priestly position is self-evident and independent of any qualities of particular priests, exactly conforming to the wishes expressed by Father Andrii, the “networking priest,” above.

However, the question of the legitimation of priestly authority, whether through the activities and characteristics of individual priests or through their organizational allegiance, is a recurring motif in discussions on the position of the Catholic Church and the role of the clergy. This tension is understandable because people interact with the organizational church on a day-to-day basis through their encounters with individual parish priests. Married Catholic priests pose an especially complex challenge in comparison with their celibate counterparts, whether those be Roman Catholic priests or monks. Because of their obligations as fathers and husbands, they have to define themselves, and be defined by the community, in relation to a wider array of social roles. In general, my lay interlocutors said that they preferred to deal with celibate clergymen, because the question of whether “a priest is a priest only when he has his vestments on” did not have to be asked as often, or at all, in such cases. Of course, celibate priests can also develop interests beyond their priestly obligations. Such interests are, however, quickly judged, often negatively, by laypeople, as has emerged in analyses of anti-clericalist discourse (Behar 1990). On the other hand, in the eyes of the laity, priests with wives and children have to be involved in certain non-clerical activities and obligations. Are priests still to be treated as priests when they attend parents’ meetings at school? Does a priest have the right to earn money in addition to his main clerical employment, if it is necessary to support his family? And if so, how does one treat him when participating in the same business activities?

There is at present a difference in people’s attitudes toward priests and the organizational church, and that difference depends on whether underground

priests were active in the given community or not. In general, wherever they were active, an attitude of respect prevails, with priests treated as people chosen by God. In places where underground priests were seldom or not at all active, priests are treated more as paid employees of the local community. This is not an absolute difference, but one of degree, with fluctuations in attitudes toward priests. Still, one can say that in villages that had a strong presence of underground priests, today's priests have an easier job if they want to take on a leadership position in the village, especially in matters of liturgical practice, but also with regard to moral guidance and financial matters. The ethnographic vignette in which Father Ivan was confronted with parishioners who began the morning liturgy without his presence and knowledge took place in a village that was one of the hubs of underground activity. He managed to solve this problem relatively easily and convince the people that his opinion counts. Contrary to the conclusions reached by Naumescu (2008a), Nowak (2008), and Pusztai and Pilipkó (2008) for Hungarian villages in Transcarpathia, my research shows that, at least in the Irshava Deanery, the effects and the impact of the work of underground priests were certainly not minimal.

One could say that I am buying into the discourse of the cult of priest-martyrs, which is an important *lieu de memoire* for the contemporary Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia and beyond. It is indeed true that the underground work and martyrdom of certain notable priests are currently being instrumentalized in struggles within the religious organizational realm. There is, moreover, a kind of competition in Transcarpathia between the Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches in terms of suffering and martyrdom, whereby the Orthodox count not only the Soviet era as the time of torment, but also the repressions that followed the revival of Orthodoxy in the early twentieth century. It is also true that until recently, the official Catholic Church ideology stressed more the survival of Greek Catholic practice and identity through underground practices than any subversive strategies of "church within the church." It was not until 2011 that I noticed a significant change in my discussions with representatives of the eparchy concerning such priests as Ilia Sidor and Andrii Hleba, mentioned above. They continue to be viewed with mixed feelings, and certainly not as heroes. In 2011, however, I heard some commentators from within the Uzhhorod Seminary who admitted that the position of being outwardly Orthodox, while remaining Greek Catholic inside was also worthy of respect and demanded bravery, even if this could not be compared with the courage and integrity that it took to maintain a

clandestine Greek Catholic practice and to refuse to sign the papers to join the Orthodox Church.

The messages of the Virgin Mary of Dzhublyk support the organizational Catholic Church in its struggle to reestablish itself in the lives of the people. The frequent references to the activities of the underground priests help to reinvigorate the image of the priest as more than a hired ritual specialist. He should be a moral guide, a person of special power, and a competent decision maker. Although Weber's term *Herrschaft* is sometimes translated as "domination" (see Swedberg and Agevall 2005), its translation as "authority" is more appropriate here. Authority (*avtoritet*) in this context means "respect," "importance," and "deserving of obedience" more than "dominance." The issue of decision making was of paramount importance to my interlocutors: Who has the main voice in deciding matters of relevance for the life of a religious community? This is actually close to Max Weber's definitions of authority as the likelihood that orders will be obeyed. As Weber's schema is widely known to elucidate three types of authority, it is probably worth recalling that his starting point was not a nominal characterization of ideal types of various authorities, but the elucidation of legitimation processes. His approach was to ask the question, "Why do people who obey a given authority actually do so?" Apart from cases of straightforward coercion, material dependence, and slavery, he saw the answer as lying in the perception of legitimacy. I would like to tweak Weber's approach somewhat and see the process of legitimation, not from the point of view of the subordinate, but mostly from the point of view of those who see themselves as being in positions of authority. How do they see and construct their authority as legitimate? I am not suggesting that a given priest sits down and consciously plans a strategy for his pastoral service as a means of legitimation. Most often the legitimation process develops in the course of everyday events. When faced with conflicts in the village or when caught between competing interests, priests have to think about changing their strategies in order to maintain their legitimacy as religious specialists.

There were two friends: one was a Catholic believer, but the other was not. One day, however, it so happened that that they went to church together. During the Eucharist, something happened to the non-believer and he began to believe and decided to get baptized. So he told his friend, "I am going to go to the priest who celebrated the mass and ask him to baptize me." But the believer knew that the priest was not a good one: he had a bad reputation and

he was not generally considered to be a good minister. Still, how can you tell this to someone who had just been converted? He was afraid of scaring his friend away. He tried to tell his friend in the most delicate manner: "You know, there are other priests that I know. Maybe you could go to one of them?" But the new convert was very stubborn. "I want to go to this priest. End of discussion," he said. So he took a preparation course with the priest and got baptized. After that, the believer thought, "Now I can talk to him openly," and asked his friend how he got along with the priest, who was, after all, a pretty hopeless case. The friend answered, "I know. And if the Christian faith has survived for 2000 years despite such priests, it must be the true faith!"

I heard this joke in September 2008 at a dinner that I shared with a few Greek Catholic priests in Transcarpathia. Although I knew and talked before to roughly half of the people gathered, I was obviously a stranger there—a layperson, a foreigner, an anthropologist, and, last but not least, the only woman in the room. One of the priests commented, after this and several other jokes were told, that they should not be taken too seriously—a somewhat strange comment taking into account that they were jokes, which are always to be taken with a grain of salt anyway. For me, the joke and the subsequent comment were indications of an understanding that is common to most, if not all, of the priests that I met: that the real importance and power resides in Christ and his church, independent of any qualities and characteristics of particular churchmen, but also that this separation of Christ's power from the priest as an individual is not to be exposed, as the priests are those who, in practice, are to embody the church in particular locations.

In 2011, a small exhibition of paintings by a young man, himself considering but still not committed to becoming a priest, was opened at the Greek Catholic seminary in Uzhorod. One of the paintings was entitled *Priesthood* and was presented with particular pride by the artist himself. The center of the picture featured the large figure of a priest in liturgical attire, turned with his back to the viewer, and facing Christ on a cross hanging in the sky among the clouds. The priest holds a chalice in his hands, raising it toward Christ. The priest himself is standing on a cloud from which the heads and busts of angels protrude, and he is partly surrounded by and partly carried by them. The bottom of the picture features people—male and female—of various ages, painted in darker colors, with some watching the priest and others looking back at the viewer. It seems as if the priest is doing something extremely dramatic and

extremely important, something that elevates him above all the others and transports him, on the backs of angels, toward Christ on the cross. Although the priest has his back to the viewer and is facing the cross and worshipping Christ, it is in fact the priest himself who is the central focus of the picture and who is the source of the action that dominates the painting.

I viewed the exhibition along with seminary students and teachers. Everyone was explicitly praising the young artist for his skills and for the emotional depth of the picture. Still, I overheard several seminary teachers commenting in a more sober tone, "Let him go to the parish and serve there for several years and then have him paint it again." One of them asked me what I thought, but before I managed to answer, he provided his own interpretation: It was indeed beautiful, but too romantic and too far away from the people. The reality is not at all like this, and the painting cannot even be treated as an allegory, unless perhaps as an allegory of wishful thinking.

Sandra Zimdars-Swartz writes that a major traditional function of Marian apparitions has been to comment on the proper behavior and position of priests—at times criticizing individual priests, and at other times reinforcing their clerical authority (Zimdars-Swartz 1991: 339). Sometimes the visionaries convey messages that do both—they criticize certain ways of being a priest, while attempting to support clerical authority in general. At most apparition sites, the Virgin Mary asks people to pray for priests. While there is nothing particularly peculiar about this, and prayer is not always strictly hierarchical, this can also be seen as a challenge to authority. Religious discourse may continually be interpreted and reinterpreted, as it provides only potentialities and never answers. If one says to a priest, "I will pray for you," it can be understood both as a blessing and an explicit challenge. I pray for you and thus remind you that you are no different from me, a sinner. We are members of a hierarchical church but we are all equal before God. The Virgin Mary is also a multivocal symbol here: she criticizes the clergy while reinforcing its authority at the same time. Apparitions are sites of struggle, and the power of the Virgin lies in the fact that within her symbolism she can embrace many different options and views. During a long conversation I had on the situation at Dzhublyk with a high church official in Uzhhorod, he said that the relative weakness of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia was the main reason why the management of the Dzhublyk apparitions had been so problematic. He explained that people did not yet understand the role that the organizational church should play in religious life. Nor was it certain that all of the church's

clergymen were clear about this. In fact, the management of Dzhublyk was, according to him, a clear indication that some clergymen did not have a proper understanding of the church's role. While he was personally convinced that the Virgin Mary had appeared in Dzhublyk, he opposed Atanasii Tsyipesh's management style, and felt that Tsyipesh could be manipulating the Virgin Mary's call for strengthening the authority of priests in order to bolster his own personal authority, and not the authority of the organizational church in general, as it should actually be interpreted.

The biographies and strategies of the priests reveal the dynamics and tensions between individuals and the organization, as well as between local contexts and global structures. In their article on the Marian apparitions in Conyers, Georgia, in the United States, Vásquez and Marquardt (2000) reflected on the attitudes and management strategies of the Catholic Church with regard to contemporary apparitions, seeing them as an example of glocalization—the process of managing particular locations in a way that makes it possible to adapt a global phenomenon to a particular situation and retain a “local flair,” but, at the same time, never compromising the fundamental recognition that they are dependent parts of a centralized and global organization. With regard to the example of New Evangelization—a complex renewal movement within the Catholic Church—they show that, although the Catholic Church as a global organization might prefer to remain invisible in some situations, it never actually loses its grip on local events. As I show in the next chapter, being Eastern Christian Orthodox and being Eastern Christian Catholic are two very different conditions that underlie the shape of local religious life, due to this divergent organizational belonging.

CHAPTER 5

Call for Unity and Management of “Divergent Devotions”

Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me,
that they may be one, even as we are one.

—John 17:11

In her main message, the Virgin Mary of Dzhublyk made two separate calls for unity: the visionaries said that she had come to help to unite the divided people and to unite the divided church. In Chapter 3, I presented an interpretation of these calls to unity with regard to complex historical and political relations between state, national, and church allegiances in Transcarpathia and Ukraine. This interpretation of Dzhublyk's messages had a strong instrumental aspect that was evident at the site. For many of the supporters and opponents of the new devotional center at Dzhublyk, it was clear that the site had been called to life with the goal of reshaping relations among the Ukrainian state, the Ukrainian nation, Transcarpathia, and the Greek Catholic Church. In this vein, the apparitions at Dzhublyk are a continuation of the long-standing efforts of the Catholic Church to shape its position vis-à-vis the system of nation-states (Casanova 1996). The apparitions spoke to those national ideologies that see religion as an important part of national identity-building processes. However, the repeated calls for unity contain significantly more interpretative potential. In Transcarpathia, the concept of unity (*ednist*) entails important valuations concerning what is desirable and ethical. To be united is seen as a moral good, and breaking that unity is judged as a moral flaw. Although some of Transcarpathia's inhabitants present diversity as a defining feature of the region that makes full embracement of Ukrainian identity and administration difficult, the analysis of their discursive practices shows that unity is also an ideal to

which they strive. Nevertheless, the questions remain: How is this unity to be imagined? Who should be united with whom and in what way?

In a series of publications, Jose Casanova (1996, 1997) analyzed the transformations of the Catholic Church as an organization headed by the Pope under changing historical circumstances, especially in the years following the Second Vatican Council. The tendency of those transformations has been, according to Casanova, a change from a state-like organization within a system of nation-states, where relations between the Vatican and particular nation-states were of utmost significance, toward understanding the church as a global organization with the Pope as a spokesman for universal human rights. Beginning in the 1960s, the church began to look beyond national causes, national struggles, and most importantly beyond the focus on its position within particular national frameworks, and started to concentrate on global issues and its role in the establishment of a global civil society.

The call for unity expressed through the Virgin Mary at Dzhublyk can be also read as a commentary on the transformations of the shape of religious life and prioritization of various kinds of identities—local, global, and national, and based on a commonality of everyday experience, values and/or interests—on the part of people who belong to a transnational religious organization such as the Catholic Church. Casanova's argumentation brings into focus two observations that are interesting for ethnographic studies of Catholic communities. First, the Catholic Church is an organization that is not a loose association of local churches, but one with a centralized structure that is perceived by its members as actively propagating its policies top-down—from the Vatican to the local parish. While those policies can sometimes favor local concerns and identities, there are always instances of centralized management that can, at times, be eclipsed, but never disappear. Second, because of the transformation of Vatican policies both in terms of detail and in their most broadly defined goals, in any given location there may well be different formulations and nexuses around which the identities of local Catholic communities are built. Moreover, these divergent formulations can coexist or even compete in any particular location.

To unite is also to create difference: to define the limits of the union and to distinguish those who are embraced by that unity from those who remain outside. In the social sciences, such matters have usually been analyzed under the umbrella of identity studies. However, Brubaker and Cooper (2000) show the ambivalent and internally contradictory character of the concept of identity

as an analytical term in the social sciences. They insist that social analysis would benefit both from a thorough analysis of the ways in which "identity" is used in academic writing and from the replacement of this term with a range of better defined and divergent analytical concepts such as "categorization," "identification," "self-understanding," "commonality," "connectedness," and "groupness"—to name just a few. This proposal is interesting and directly relevant to my ethnographic material, although I agree with Donahoe et al. (2009) that getting rid of the concept of identity is premature, because it would make it more difficult to conduct a comparative study of the ways in which people see themselves as belonging to various kinds of collectives. Although it is to an extent contradictory to the doubts of Brubaker and Cooper (2000) concerning the analytical value of identity, the concepts that they suggest can provide a helpful starting point precisely in the analysis of collective identities. While they point to different ways in which identities are built, they are still modes of seeing oneself as part of some social collective.

In this chapter I present different understandings of what it means to identify as a Catholic under changing historical conditions. The messages of Dzhublyk can help us to focus on the process of change in modes of identification that are presently taking place in the lives of Transcarpathian Catholics. In particular, the feelings and attitudes that Brubaker and Cooper refer to as "groupness" are giving way either to "commonality" or "connectedness" as principles of more loosely affiliative forms of self-understanding in terms of religious identity. Brubaker and Cooper describe commonality as "the sharing of some common attribute," connectedness as "the relational ties that link people," and groupness as "the sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group" (2000: 20). What I find inspiring in their proposal is that they do not try to replace one understanding of identity with another (e.g., stable with fluid, deep with superficial, singular with multiple), but allow for a broader analytical vocabulary that could show the complexity of processes of identification in each particular case.

In this chapter I show how the repeated calls for unity that the visionaries heard from the Virgin Mary of Dzhublyk steer our attention toward the changes that have taken place in the religious life of Transcarpathia. The local parish community is still important and seen as a part of the local organizational church under the guidance of a local bishop. Religion as a community cult (Casanova 1994: 45ff) is still very much relevant, and religious identity, as concentrated in groups understood as distinctive, bounded, and solidary, is

still of significance. At the same time, however, other kinds of religious attachments have been gaining importance as well. The concepts used for the analysis of religious transformations in the West, such as “believing without belonging” (Davie 1994), “privatization of religion,” or their variants (Luckmann 1967), seem to me of limited help in understanding the situation in Transcarpathia. People do care about the public presence of religion and about the possibility of worship within some sort of organizational framework, while religion in its organizational form also seems to have a strong place as a “chain of memory” (Hervieu-Léger 2000), especially when we look at the claims and struggles surrounding the underground priests as described in Chapters 3 and 4. Still, there has been an important change in how people see the role of institutional and organizational religion in their lives and, going back to the concepts expressed in the messages of the Virgin Mary of Dzhublyk, how people view what this unity she calls for is about. We can observe a shift toward religious identity based on the combination of commonality and connectedness, in which people define their religious lives through the kinds of religious messages and symbols they look for and subscribe to, as well as through the relational ties that link them to others whom they expect to be interested in the same types of religious messages and experiences. What is important, though, is that institutional and organizational religion is still a very important part of this configuration as a guarantee of the validity of religious beliefs and practices. The feeling that one is a *Catholic* believer is constitutive of the choices one makes in the religious realm. In this sense, the Catholic Church becomes a repository of symbols and practices that are used to construct one’s own religious practice. The legitimation of the given practices through the Church is still an important factor.

In this chapter I present the transformations of the modes of religious identifications for which the Dzhublyk apparitions are both symptoms and tools of change. Although virtually everyone, including the Virgin Mary, seems to have been speaking of unity as an ideal of religious life, views of what counts as unity can be quite different. Moreover, these divergent understandings coexist and mutually influence each other in ways that allow each interested party to claim to be precisely the one who is the main protector of this unity. I begin with a presentation of the relationships between the parish of Nyzhnie Bolotne and the communities that have been established at the Dzhublyk apparition site. I describe the ritual practice of *psaltyr* as the most vivid example of a community cult (Casanova 1994), that is, a religious practice that underlines

the concurrence of religious with other lines of demarcation within the community. I show that the communal religious practice is, for many of the people of Nyzhnie Bolotne, a sign of the integrity of local community in a Durkheimian sense. I also show how, in the eyes of some Nyzhnie Bolotne inhabitants, the followers of Dzhublyk threaten this integrity, and how they in turn respond to such accusations. Moreover, I discuss the influence of Dzhublyk on the religious life of the local religious community in Nyzhnie Bolotne.

I subsequently show that some, especially younger, supporters of Dzhublyk emphasize the connectedness and commonality of practice over belonging to a bounded community of believers. I show how the use of modern technologies facilitates an emergence of a new type of potentially limitless religious network that retains the Vatican as a reference point. I also discuss the example of a prayer network called "Mothers' Prayers,"⁹⁸ whose members I came to know through Dzhublyk. Although most of its members are firmly anchored in their local parishes, they enjoy being part of a global network of praying mothers. It is important to bear in mind, however, that in the case of Ukraine these women are eager to keep this new movement within the framework of Catholicism, that is, as a devotional practice legitimated by the Catholic Church, despite the more ecumenical or even interreligious character of the movement in other countries. The changes in religious life in contemporary Ukraine cannot be adequately described as the privatization or individualization of religion, especially since the members of religious networks see their religious involvement not only or even, not primarily, as a path to deepening their own religious experience, but as a way of enabling them to become involved with the world and to have a say in public debates.

I subsequently turn to the activities of the representatives of the organizational church, that is, Catholic priests and bishops. I show how support for certain kinds of religious practice introduced substantial changes to religious life at the local level. In particular, I show that these changes have led to differentiation in the understandings and practices of religion that had been termed the "Orthodox imaginary" by Vlad Naumescu (2008a). I conclude this chapter with some reflections on the globalization and glocalization of networks of Marian devotion (Margry 2004).

⁹⁸ On its Internet homepage the name of this organization is written "Mothers Prayers," without the possessive apostrophe after "Mothers." As this is clearly an oversight, I am taking the liberty of adding the apostrophe here and in all subsequent mentions of the organization.

Dzhublyk and Nyzhnie Bolotne Parish

Whenever I stayed overnight in Nyzhnie Bolotne from Saturday to Sunday, I had to decide where I would attend a Sunday liturgy. I could go to mass at the local parish church or I could follow those of my acquaintances who would walk the two kilometers to Dzhublyk. Some people, both in Vil'khivka and Nyzhnie Bolotne, almost exclusively go to Dzhublyk, while others almost always attend mass in their respective parish churches.⁹⁹ There is also a large group who, like me, decide where to go, which changes from Sunday to Sunday. Theoretically, of course, the liturgy is the same in both places, and attendance at either would satisfy the third Commandment, which requires the faithful to celebrate the holy day. However, although the liturgies may be the same, they are not the same type of social occasion.

Whenever Maria, a middle-aged woman who always attended the liturgy at the local parish church in Nyzhnie Bolotne, and who did much to help me with my research, heard that I had opted for the longer Sunday walk to Dzhublyk, she usually nodded with understanding, but also with a bit of disapproval. She told me that she understood my reasons, as I was to write a book on religious life in the region, and Dzhublyk was an important event in the lives of Greek Catholics in the Irshava Deanery. So yes, I did have to go there and see it for myself. Besides, there was nothing wrong with Dzhublyk, which celebrated the same Eucharist, the same Jesus, and the same Virgin Mary as the parish church. But, she added, didn't I think that Father Ivan, Nyzhnie Bolotne's parish priest, deserved better than to be left alone? He cared for the people and was a good priest, so why should we abandon him and go to Dzhublyk? Were we to leave our church, the church that our parents kept alive for the Catholic faith during the socialist era? Maria did not doubt that the Virgin Mary had appeared in Dzhublyk. Still, was this to mean that Dzhublyk was preferable to the parish church as a place of worship for people from Nyzhnie Bolotne?

One Sunday morning on the way to Dzhublyk I spoke to Vira, a woman who also often attended the parish church, but who decided to make the longer walk to Dzhublyk that particular Sunday. And why not? She explained that it was actually quite nice to celebrate the mass there, not in an enclosed church but practically out in the woods. There was fresh air, good weather, a nice walk,

⁹⁹ I lived in Nyzhnie Bolotne for part of my research, but never in Vil'khivka, so my choice was always between the Nyzhnie Bolotne parish church and Dzhublyk.

young people all around, and the chance to be away from the gaze of neighbors. Besides, at Dzhublyk one could stand wherever one chose with no fixed places. In the parish church, even those without their own paid seats (*stilets*) usually found themselves in the same spots, week after week, and knew exactly who would be standing next to them. And one felt observed there. In Dzhublyk, one could stand directly in front of the altar one week and then a place further away, almost hidden among the trees, the next. One felt freer there. Some of her neighbors also went there, but it was generally a place full of strangers, people coming from Irshava, Mukachevo, even from Galicia, all those pilgrims arriving from far away! And one can imagine being one of them...so many young people, nice singing, fresh air. Of course, the parish liturgy was important, she added, and Father Ivan needed support, but...sometimes it was nice to go to Dzhublyk.

Priests conduct the same Greek Catholic liturgy in both Dzhublyk and the parish church, but the rites are not social equivalents. While the basic form as described in the liturgical books remains (almost) the same, the ways in which the rites are actually enacted vary in significant ways. The difference is striking even for an external observer: in the parish church, all of the women wear dresses or skirts and cover their heads with scarves that are usually dark in color. The liturgy is sung and the laity is led in their song by a group of male, usually older, cantors. It is often the case that the cantors sing in Church Slavonic, while the priests conduct the liturgy in Ukrainian. The melodies stay the same week after week, and are typical of the region. At Dzhublyk, by contrast, the songs are led by a choir of young people, mostly girls. Before the liturgy, during communion, and after the final blessing, the choir sings both Ukrainian versions of contemporary Catholic hymns and pieces composed by Father Atanasii, sometimes accompanied by guitars and keyboards. The songs can be cheerful and passionate, but are always full of directly expressed emotion. And CDs can be bought to listen to the songs later.¹⁰⁰ Many women wear pants, and some of them do not cover their hair, while others wear colorful or transparent scarfs. While Father Atanasii does observe people's behavior during the liturgy and discourages walking around, talking, and even individual devotion during the mass, one still feels freer at Dzhublyk in the midst of all the new people, singing, and nature.

¹⁰⁰ For the significance of the availability of recorded religious material, see e.g., Brennan (2012) and Hirschkind (2001, 2006).

Although there is a lot of debate about the veracity of the Virgin Mary's apparitions at Dzhublyk and a good number of articulate skeptics in the other villages of the Irshava Deanery, including Vil'khivka, this is nearly never the case in Nyzhnie Bolotne. Choosing to go to Dzhublyk is not a matter of confirming the apparitions, as everyone seems to be in agreement that the Virgin Mary appeared there, and that one should celebrate liturgies there as well. The controversy instead involves the possible replacement of parish-based religious practice with such practice based at the apparition site. As one of the teachers from Nyzhnie Bolotne and a devoted follower of Dzhublyk told me in 2011:

I was talking to my uncle and he asked me, "You were there [at Dzhublyk]—what did you get out of it?" And I answered, "We had the Divine Liturgy, the same as you in the parish church. Is it not the same liturgy, regardless of where you celebrate it?" And he had no answer for me. The liturgy is valid in the parish church and at Dzhublyk. And I asked him, "Don't you think that the Divine Liturgy is the same everywhere?" And, he, an elderly man, said, "Yes, it is the same." We have had no further discussions on the topic since. But he still goes to the parish church.

The problem for those who resist accepting Dzhublyk as a focus of everyday religious life is that, according to them, it disrupts the coherence of the basic unit of religious life, the village-based parish. The above quotation was part of a longer discussion on Dzhublyk I had with the teacher and one of her colleagues, who, although also visiting Dzhublyk from time to time, prefer to allocate to that a different place in religious life, a place normally reserved for monasteries. In their 2000 article, Finke and Wittberg introduce the idea that, for the Catholic Church, the establishment of monasteries served as a mechanism to accommodate especially vigorous or even experimental types of devotion within its framework. Monasteries are seen, in this approach, as communities of people devoted to the main doctrinal claims of the Catholic Church, but at the same time are set apart as spaces where innovative religious practices can be exercised and explored without threatening the stability of everyday devotional practice. The argument is framed in terms of a church-sect dichotomy, but my research shows that it can also have analytical validity outside this framework. Dzhublyk hosts a monastery, but at the same time refuses to limit itself to being a place of intermittent religiosity, where people

come only if they wish to reinvigorate their religious lives. Instead, it aspires to be the focus of everyday religious practice.

As a rule, monasteries do not fulfill the functions of parishes in the Greek Catholic Church. Although there are monasteries that are mainly visited by people living nearby, the influence of a monastery is never limited to one parish alone. Moreover, monasteries do not, as a rule, provide ritual services such as marriages, baptisms, or the first Holy Communion celebrations, the organization of which is the prerogative of the parish. Those who wish to get married in a monastery or have their children baptized there have to ask for special permission from a local bishop; sometimes bishops cede this prerogative to the nearest parish priest. For a monastery to receive the status of a parish church, the issue has to be negotiated between the given religious order and the local bishop. As Mart Bax showed in his work on Medjugorje (1991a, 1995), the tension between the monastic and diocesan religious regimes is an important feature of Catholicism.

The status of Dzhublyk, however, is not fully clear; there is some confusion in official documents, and even more in ritual practice. One group, mostly members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Family, an organization of people from Nyzhnie Bolotne who actively support the site (*see* Chapter 2), focus their religious life almost exclusively on Dzhublyk. Although officially parishioners of St. Michael's Parish in Nyzhnie Bolotne, the members of the group prefer to have life-cycle rituals for themselves and their families conducted at Dzhublyk. Early on, they would ask the bishop for special permission to hold these rites there. Over time, however, such requests became so frequent that the bishop ceded the right to the local parish priest to approve Dzhublyk rituals. However, it is difficult to say if permission is sought in each individual case. In 2011, after witnessing First Communion celebrations at Dzhublyk, I mentioned it to parish priests in Nyzhnie Bolotne and Vil'khivka, and neither of them knew that the celebration had taken place. Some young people, particularly those who belong to the Children of the Holy Family organization, do not attend catechism classes in their village parish, but are taught by nuns and monks at Dzhublyk.

Interestingly, when the Bilki Deanery was carved out of the Irshava Deanery in the summer of 2011, the list of parishes that were announced during the inaugural celebration included the "monastic parish of Dzhublyk." Before the celebration, I discussed the situation in Dzhublyk with both the dean of the Irshava Deanery and the newly appointed dean of the Bilki Deanery, and they both told me that Dzhublyk was not, in fact, a parish, but a monastery. So

I asked them about it again after the inauguration, and they were both puzzled and convinced that it must have been a mistake or, at worst, the outcome of negotiations between the bishop and Father Atanasii. It was thought that he would clearly be interested in attaining the status of a parish, as it would secure the offerings that people bring on occasions of life-cycle rituals for Dzhublyk. The deans told me that they would clear the matter with the bishop immediately. Still, it seems unlikely that Dzhublyk would in practice lose the status equating it with a parish.

The issue of whether Dzhublyk should be treated as a parish was also discussed among Dzhublyk supporters. One woman explained that the fact that Dzhublyk had begun to fulfill parish functions had not been a matter of any conscious choice or decision to draw people away from the local parish community. In fact, it was her view that it might have been better had Dzhublyk retained its special monastic role, with people still realizing some of their religious needs through their village churches. Still, as she said, the initial struggles with regard to Dzhublyk and the constant fear that the place would simply be closed down, if they did not go there every day to defend it and to show how important it was for them, contributed to the emergence of devoted Dzhublyk followers and the Brotherhood of the Holy Family. As one of its most active members told me:

We have followed the apparitions of the Holy Family so closely that I can even say it borders on fanaticism. Still, to understand this, one has to live through it; one has to defend it. I know how difficult it was for us to save it, not for us but for all people, but I have lived through it and [that's why] we are like this.... I can understand those who criticize us, because we can even be aggressive in our defense of Dzhublyk.

From the point of view of the members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Family, the struggle for Dzhublyk continues to this day. The most intense struggles, however, took place during the year following the initial 2002 apparitions. At the time, the previous head of the eparchy, Bishop Ivan Semedii, explicitly forbade the priests to visit Dzhublyk. It was the very physical presence of devotees at Dzhublyk that practically saved the place from being closed down at the time. When Ivan Semedii retired in January 2003, his successor, Milan Šašik, began a series of more subtle negotiations over Dzhublyk. In doing so, he sought to achieve a degree of control over the newly forming pilgrimage site

in order to prevent the eventual separation of the Dzhublyk community from the Catholic Church. It cannot be said how feasible such a scenario would have been in the case of Dzhublyk, but given the situation involving some apparitional sites on the other side of the Carpathian Mountains, for example in Ternopil' or Lishnia,¹⁰¹ the possibility of such a split could not simply be dismissed. Virtually all my interlocutors from the eparchial center agreed that a strategy of not antagonizing Dzhublyk followers was the right choice, which, at least to some extent, calmed down the passions surrounding the site. However, the same strategy also led to this split in the religious life of the local community in Nyzhnie Bolotne. In Vil'khivka, where there was less interest in participation in Dzhublyk activities, some people even expressed doubts about whether one could count Dzhublyk as a Catholic site. After all, why would people build a new site when they could attend Catholic parish churches either in Nyzhnie Bolotne or Vil'khivka? They must therefore have been seeking something different, some other kind of religious life that was unlike the one on offer in their parishes. This supposition actually quite adequately captures at least part of the problem.

May 27, 2003 is still well remembered by those for whom Dzhublyk is a place of importance. I have seen a video recorded that day at Dzhublyk and talked to many people about the events. In brief, Bishop Milan Šašik, supported at that time by the elderly Bishop Ivan Marhitych, wanted to have Father Atanasii removed from Dzhublyk and agreed to cede the management of the place to the Studite monks, more specifically, to Hrihorii Planchak.¹⁰² Father Atanasii was supposed to join the order and stay in their monastery in Kolodiivka, at

¹⁰¹ Ternopil' and Lishnia are apparition sites in western Ukraine at which messages very critical of the church as an organization have been delivered. At present, they are both explicitly rejected by the respective Greek Catholic Church eparchies. See also Chapter 2.

¹⁰² Although in Transcarpathia Planchak's followers are widely known as Studite monks, Vlad Naumescu (2007) describes a much more complex picture concerning the organizational adherence and monastic practice of his followers. This was a group that initially separated from the Basilian order in Galicia and established a new monastic community in Kolodiivka with a clear contemplative and Byzantine orientation. This was done according to the rule of Theodore the Studite. Naumescu writes, however, that they should not be confused with the Studite monastic order operating in Galicia from the time of Andrii Sheptycki, which survived underground during the Soviet era. The Kolodiivka monks were more followers of the monastic order established by Josip Slipyi in Rome for those Ukrainian monks who escaped from the Soviet Union. After Slipyi's death, the order continued his activities near Rome under the supervision of

least for the time being. The scenes that took place at Dzhublyk on and around that day were highly emotional. For the supporters of Dzhublyk, both from the Irshava Deanery and from far away, late May 2003 was the time of a decisive battle over Dzhublyk. One of the active Dzhublyk supporters from L'viv told me about the day:

There was a Divine Liturgy [at Dzhublyk], and Planchak led it. And he preached and said, "I have talked to Bishop Milan, I have documents, and Atanasii has to leave this place." I listened to the Divine Liturgy, but then I shouted as loud as I could, "A lie! This is a lie!" Still, he talked to Atanasii and he was actually prepared to go away....But I gathered all the people from Nyzhnii Bolotne and told them, "We have to pray, because only through prayer can we find the truth. We do not know; only God knows the truth." So we gathered and prayed. And I said, "We should all go to confession and to the Eucharist and offer this Holy Communion with the aim of allowing things to be as God wants them." We did not know who should stay there, Atanasii or Planchak. And we all went to confession and took the Holy Communion with this in mind....And during the Divine Liturgy, Father Atanasii was expected to announce that he was leaving for Kolodiivka. After the Divine Liturgy, Father Atanasii started to say the following, "You, Father [Planchak], told me that I had a choice: if I wanted everything to end well, I should go to your monastery. And if I wanted to become a martyr, I should stay here. I have prayed a lot and I have thought a lot. And I am now going to tell you what I have to say." He knelt down, put his hand on the Bible, and said, "I am going to tell the truth. I have prayed long and I have suffered." His voice trembled. "I asked the Purest Virgin Mary to tell me what I should say." Then he stuttered: "I, I...I am staying here!" And his hand was on the Bible! And I shouted at this moment, "The heart of the Virgin Mary has won!" as loudly as I could! And everyone shouted. God wanted him to stay with us.

There were other stories related to that day, with children crying, people praying hour after hour and not leaving the site, fearing that if they did, Dzhublyk might cease to exist. Father Atanasii became the guarantor of Dzhublyk's survival in the eyes of the most ardent Dzhublyk followers. The experience of defending

Lubomyr Husar. It was Husar who suggested that Planchak continue this line of monastic life in independent Ukraine (Naumescu 2007: 169ff).

Dzhublyk gave the people a special feeling of emotional attachment to each other and a sense of having the power to defend the place, or as one of the active members of the Brotherhood quoted above said, to fight for it in a way that can be seen by others as aggressive.

What kind of community is the community of Dzhublyk followers? It is a diverse network of people from Transcarpathia, Ukrainian Galicia, and beyond, connected through their commitment to a location that they regard as a place of direct divine intervention. This network includes and combines a tightly knit group of neighbors and relatives, but it also extends to include individuals that are connected to Dzhublyk through their strong experience of having defended the site in the initial months. The network, however, has never stopped growing, with new pilgrims and devotees, including new enthusiastic supporters, joining. For the core group of followers of Dzhublyk from Nyzhnie Bolotne, the place is the center of their religious life, replacing the parish church to a large extent. However, it is not just an additional parish located between Nyzhnie Bolotne and Vil'khivka. It is the focus of an extended network of religious practice within the organizational framework of the Catholic Church, but at the same time a place where the limits set by the organizational structure of the church are tested and modified.

The Practice of the *Psaltyr*

The difference between parish-based religiosity and Dzhublyk-based religiosity in Nyzhnie Bolotne is not only to be observed at the apparition site and the village church building. For me, the epitome of parish-based religiosity is the practice of collectively praying the *psaltyr*. The *psaltyr* was one of the very first ritual occasions in which I was invited to participate after my arrival. It was on my second evening in Nyzhnie Bolotne in 2006, when the family with whom I was staying asked me if I would be interested in joining them for an evening *psaltyr* prayer on the anniversary of the death of their grandfather. They warned me that it could be a tiring event for an outsider, as *psaltyr* prayers are rarely shorter than four hours. I joined them and have since attended many similar occasions in various villages of the Irshava Deanery.

Psaltyr is a term for the Book of Psalms divided into twenty chapters, according to Eastern Christian tradition (*kafisma*). In Transcarpathia it is used as the basis for communal prayers that are organized by lay believers, most

often without the presence of a priest. Each village has its own *psaltry* tradition, and they all differ in detail while the general structure stays the same. The *psaltry* is most often prayed for a deceased person. The people first gather immediately upon receiving the news of the death, then again a second time forty days later, and once more to mark the anniversary of the death. In some villages, the *psaltry* is held on other occasions as well, such as birthdays or when someone needs the support of communal prayer (for example, in times of illness or before important examinations). After the prayers are finished, there is an obligatory meal for all the participants. At all of the *psaltrys* I attended it consisted of several hot dishes such as soup, fried fish, cabbage rolls, and meat rolls, as well as salads. Alcohol was not served at the *psaltrys* I attended, but I was told that it was common in some villages.

Usually the prayer organizers do not inform potential participants when the *psaltry* will take place if it is held for a deceased person. While only those who are invited come for birthday and health *psaltrys*, anyone can join the prayers for the dead, and people do come, gathering at the organizer's house in the evening and staying until midnight. The house is usually packed with people all dressed in black, women with their hair covered with black scarves, and everyone crammed around the tables, sitting on chairs borrowed from neighbors, all with their own books of psalms even though many know all of the psalms by heart. Most often, parish cantors lead the *psaltry* prayers, although alternative female *psaltrys* are also held in some villages, with groups of women leading the prayers. These usually mark more cheerful occasions, such as birthdays or prayers for successful university or professional exams. On such occasions, colorful headscarves replace the black head coverings for women (fig. 5.1).

The *psaltry* begins with an intonation by the cantors, followed by communal prayers (which are always sung), which are accompanied by a routine of sitting and standing over a period of one to two hours. After that, the cantor divides all of the chapters among the participants, with one praying chapter 1, another chapter 2, and a third participant chapter 3, and so on, until every person present has been assigned a chapter (certain chapters get repeated as there are usually more people present than chapters). Those who lead sing their chapters aloud, while the others pray the allocated psalms to themselves, each in his or her own personal rhythm, standing and sitting at the appropriate moments according to the texts they are reading. As an observer, I was always deeply touched and amazed at how all the people read their prayers with great sincerity



Figure 5.1 Women in black scarves during *psaltry* prayers in Nyzhnie Bolotne touching each others shoulders, forming a net connecting the living and the dead, June 2011

and devotion. No line of prayer was skipped and no word forgotten in a room ever steaming from concentration and devotion; short pauses were taken only to drink a glass of water or to wipe perspiration from one's forehead in the hot and crowded room. As one of the parish priests explained:

This is an expression of unity! And everyone knows that the reading of the *psaltry* in Bilki may be different from reading of the *psaltry* in Silce. Still, the inhabitants of Bilki have known everything about the way of reading the *psaltry* there for at least a hundred years. And everyone also knows how it is done in Silce, from the youngest to the oldest. And if I ask you to come and read the *psaltry* (*na chytalnika*), then you drop any work you have, leave everything, and I do not pay you a penny for this! People just come and read the *psaltry*. How is this possible in the contemporary world, where no one does anything for you if you do not pay for it?! And people here go and sit for four hours in a full house where the temperature can even reach fifty degrees Celsius, without receiving pay or anything. They walk five kilometers one way and then five kilometers back again at midnight in the dark. They leave their families, their cattle, their work. How can you explain such a phenomenon?

After attending the *psaltyr* a few times as an observer, I was finally handed the Book of Psalms and I could join in the common song. In doing so, I could bodily feel the power of this communal singing and the hours spent in the crowded room started to feel like minutes. The ritual brought about a feeling of being part of the community, being one with all those who had come to support one of their fellows in prayer. A decorated loaf of bread, baked especially for this occasion, was placed on the table with a lighted candle in the middle. I was told that this represented the deceased. When the *psaltyr* prayers were over, the main cantor picked up the bread, and a woman standing next to him put her hand on his shoulder, and the next person on her shoulder, and so on, so that the final prayer connected everyone through a massive network of hands. Then the bread was shared among all those present and a meal served (fig. 5.2 and 5.3).

The *psaltyr* is the most stable ritual of communal religion in the region. It was carried out throughout the underground period without the presence of priests, and it continues to be done that way to this day. It stands for the religious unity of the local community. Although separate Catholic and Orthodox cantors lead the *psaltyr* in mixed villages, locals can attend both, regardless of their official religious affiliation. Relatives of the deceased from other villages also travel to the *psaltyr*, but it is the neighbors and fellow villagers who form the core of the prayer group. Refusing to come to the *psaltyr* is seen as a withdrawal from the local community. The ritual is replete with moments that demonstrate the unity and connectedness of the group; it can be seen as both an expression and a tool of social cohesion. This is why when people talked about Dzhublyk followers limiting participation in the *psaltyr* to their closest kin and fellow members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Family, it was linked with a clear moral judgment.

When I was invited in 2011 to a *psaltyr* in Nyzhnie Bolotne organized forty days after the death of an elderly woman, I was told that I should absolutely not miss it if I wanted to learn something about the influence Dzhublyk had on village life. The deceased was a close relative of a family very active in supporting the Dzhublyk site, so one would expect that the “Dzhublykers” (*dzhublykovske*) would also appear. In Nyzhnie Bolotne, one does not explicitly invite people to participate in the *psaltyr*, as people can figure out the right date and come themselves. If the date has to be changed, the news spreads by word of mouth without invitations being issued. During this particular *psaltyr*, it was clear that the house belonged to a family of Dzhublyk followers. On the walls



Figure 5.2 Cantors sharing a meal during *psalmyr* in Nyzhnie Bolotne, June 2011



Figure 5.3 Bread symbolising the deceased at *psalmyr* in Nyzhnie Bolotne, June 2011

there was not only the image of the Virgin Mary of Dzhublyk, but also other devotional pictures that were clearly new additions, in an aesthetic style not seen in other homes in the region (fig. 5.4). Both before and after the prayers, the Dzhublyk followers gathered in one corner of the room and started to sing



Figure 5.4 People praying psaltery in a house of Dzhublyk followers in Nyzhnie Bolotne, June 2011

contemporary Catholic songs, all of them new to their fellow villagers. In short, while they did participate in the village ritual, they skirted around its edges somewhat. They added new elements from the global repertoire of Catholic images and devotions that were markers of religious change for their fellow villagers, signs that, although they are still Catholics, the *dzhublykovske* are not Catholics in the same way. Although they participated in a ritual of communal religion, they also highlighted the fact that they belonged to the Catholic Church not as members of a local religious community, but as participants in global Catholic devotion.

From Community Cult to Religious Network: Dzhublyk and Mothers' Prayers

While the youth organization of the Children of the Holy Family was officially established in Dzhublyk in 2007, children and young people were instrumental in the development of Dzhublyk from the very beginning. In the initial weeks and months after the apparitions, peers of the visionaries gathered almost every night, praying and playing next to the Dzhublyk well. Many parents remember that it was difficult then to get their children to come home and that they wanted

to spend every hour free of school or home duties at Dzhublyk. The youth of Dzhublyk (*molod' Dzhublyka*), as they called themselves, who are now young adults, remember this as an exceptional time, as the time that they started to feel that they could lead their religious lives in a way different from what they knew from their parish community. Before the apparitions, they all went to church together with their families, especially those who lived in Nyzhnie Bolotne. Still, the experience of Dzhublyk was something special for them. As one of the leaders of the youth organization told me in 2011:

It is not out of habit that we have been coming here for the last nine years. I am now at the university [in Uzhhorod] and see a different type of society there, young people who are very diverse. And I come here and can rest...my soul. You come here and you do not want to leave anymore. Home, well, that is just home, but here you get strength and energy, and that energy lasts very long. You can share it with your friends at the university. Put simply, there is a blessing here, something that makes you reluctant to leave. You can simply sit here or pray and rest spiritually. That is what this place, Dzhublyk, is like.

The young people who took part in the initial events at Dzhublyk are now in their early twenties, and many of them have since left the village of Nyzhnie Bolotne for work or study. They still return to Dzhublyk—the students in Uzhhorod almost every weekend, and those who study in L'viv (as, for example, Olenka, one of the Dzhublyk visionaries) or other Ukrainian towns can visit Dzhublyk a few times a year. Still, they keep in touch in ways that make them connected by more than just a reference to a particular sacred place. Every week, Brother Theodore, a young monk who is a warden of the Dzhublyk youth organization, sends text messages to all the members. The messages contain a prayer focus for a given week and a section of the Bible that should be read and reflected on. Sometimes they pray together despite a physical separation of up to hundreds of kilometers. For example, during my stay in 2011, the Children of the Holy Family agreed to pray a special prayer (*deviatnica*) to the Holy Spirit every day at nine o'clock in the evening, wherever they happened to be. In this way they formed a virtual network of prayer, based on the feeling that they are never alone and that a number of their peers are praying with them at the same time.

The very idea of establishing the Children of the Holy Family as a formal organization came to the youngsters when they realized, during their meetings

with pilgrims coming to Dzhublyk from western Ukraine, that youth organizations are a part of the modern religious landscape within the Catholic Church. At that time, just a few years ago, in Transcarpathia itself, the parish was virtually the only formation of lay activity within the Church—formal Catholic religious organizations that extended beyond the borders of a parish were rare or nonexistent. This has changed in recent years, as such organizations are now supported by the present bishop, Milan Šašik. He seems to be very open to various kinds of tools of evangelization that are available within the framework of the global Catholic Church, being at the same time both a strong supporter of re-Byzantization policies and sensitive to the specificities of Transcarpathian Catholicism. Dzhublyk became a place where elements of religious practice that are innovations from the point of view of parish life in Transcarpathian villages can be enacted and tried out. The members of the Children of the Holy Family who study in large Ukrainian cities are skilled in using the Internet as a resource. They meet with peers from different regions who are interested in religious life and bring to Dzhublyk new ways that religion can be practiced. As Brother Theodore told me:

You know, only two or three old men sing in the parish church, but the young people are here! That is exciting! After Dzhublyk our youth became more active. Before Dzhublyk, they went to church on Sunday and that was it. And now their parents say, “You should move to Dzhublyk because nobody can keep you from the place anyway.” And they have new acquaintances thanks to Dzhublyk—one of our girls was an *animator*¹⁰³ with the Salesian brothers in L’viv, and she brings new ideas from them—songs and dances. This is normal among Roman Catholics, and is normal in Poland, but in the Eastern Rite? No! How could you dance in the church?! It was the Salesians, Don Bosco,¹⁰⁴ a Roman Catholic community, who taught her this, and she brought it to us. In Uzhhorod they tried it out in the cathedral church, but here it is

¹⁰³ A person who organizes events and acts as a master of ceremonies.

¹⁰⁴ Giovanni Melchiorre Bosco (popularly and internationally known as Don Bosco, 1815–1888) was an Italian Roman Catholic priest and a founder of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, popularly known as the Salesian Society, a Roman Catholic religious order devoted primarily to work with children and young adults. An important part of Salesian pedagogy is the organization of various kinds of artistic and athletic activities for children.

know-how.¹⁰⁵ It is new and they are introducing it. The most important outcome is that the church is becoming interesting for the young people.

Religious innovations have been coming to the Transcarpathian villages not only through the organizations around Dzhublyk. Other prayer networks, not bounded by parish borders have, for example, been appearing in the region in recent years. In the Soviet era and until recently, the most common form of laity prayer involved various forms of rosary circles. In rosary circles (*rozhanki*), people belonging to the given prayer group commit to praying one rosary decade every day. Everyone is assigned one of the so-called mysteries surrounding the life of Jesus, on which one should meditate in prayer for a month. The mysteries are usually written or printed on pieces of paper along with corresponding images. These are usually exchanged among the members of the rosary circles every first Friday of the month, following a special liturgy organized for them in a local church. The rosary prayers were and still are deeply embedded within the traditional devotional practices of parish-based Catholic life. Still, new prayer groups have appeared in recent years, the very structure and principles of which move their members beyond the framework of parish-based religion.

Through Dzhublyk, I have met members of the growing Mothers' Prayers movement,¹⁰⁶ who form a network connected through a common pattern of prayer (Halemba 2012). The Mothers' Prayers movement originated in the United Kingdom in November 1995, when two grandmothers, Veronica Williams and her sister-in-law Sandra, felt a special inner calling to pray for their children and grandchildren. They began by praying the rosary together, and then invited three other women to join in. Gradually they established a format for prayer meetings and published it in a booklet, which then gained notice in the local and national media. The movement grew and spread to many countries around the world, including Ukraine. The praying mothers meet once a week in small, local prayer groups, and are linked to a global network in a variety of ways. First of all, the Transcarpathian coordinator of the Mothers' Prayers movement told me that it is desirable to organize the meetings of different groups on different days or at least at different times, with the aim of upholding the continuity of mothers' prayers around the world, so that one of

¹⁰⁵ See section below on *know-how*.

¹⁰⁶ See www.mothersprayers.org (accessed March 23, 2015).

the groups is praying at any given moment—when Australians are going to sleep, prayers are just beginning in Europe and then in America; and when one Ukrainian village stops praying, another one starts. Moreover, if there is a need to intensify the power of prayer for a special cause, a call for prayers is spread by text messages that are first sent to regional coordinators, and then distributed to village coordinators, who in turn inform individual members.

The structure of the movement links local communities to religious worlds beyond the borders of the local parish on different levels. First, annual Mothers' Prayers meetings are organized at the regional and national levels. Second, national coordinators also meet at international conferences organized in a different country each year. Third, and most importantly, the praying mothers are linked through modern technologies and in the understanding that they form a worldwide network. What is specific to Ukraine in comparison, for instance, to the United Kingdom, the founding country of the movement, are the denominational boundaries of the movement's membership. As Veronica Williams says in her promotional publications, the movement accepts people of any denomination, as well as those who do not belong to any organized religion, as long as they agree to take part in the common prayers. In Ukraine, however, the Greek Catholic Church quickly decided to take control of the movement and incorporate it into its organizational framework. The national coordinator of Mothers' Prayers in Ukraine explained to me how she had to negotiate both the content of the prayers and the organization of the movement with church authorities. In short, the praying mothers were told that the movement can be accepted as a legitimate practice for Catholic believers only if a certain level of organizational control over it is maintained. In each eparchy a priest has been appointed to take responsibility for the Mothers' Prayers, and the prayer booklet has been modified to, as it was phrased, fit the Eastern character of the Greek Catholic Church.

I also interviewed the priest responsible for Mothers' Prayers in the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo. In his view, the movement offers great opportunity for religious revitalization, but he sees his task as ensuring that it remains within the organizational framework of Catholicism. He said that the way to achieve this was to ensure clerical control over the movement's activities, which was to be attained through the closer integration of the Mothers' Prayers into parish life and making sure that prayer groups are organized only with the permission of a parish priest, who, in his eyes, is the person who best knows the needs of his parishioners. If a given priest believes

that such a prayer group is redundant in his parish, mothers should not be able to meet there and pray. They are also always supposed to meet in the church building and preferably attend liturgy before or after their common prayers. This goes explicitly against the advice of Veronica Williams, who suggested that the meetings take place outside any religious building in order to keep them open to all those interested, regardless of denomination. Moreover, the Greek Catholic Church supports the establishment of only one prayer community in each parish, although, according to another piece of Veronica Williams's advice, the ideal group size is up to eight people and, if more people wish to join, groups should split in two, without regard to parish affiliation. There has been discussion of this principle among the Transcarpathian praying mothers, who understand the rationale behind insisting on a small number of participants, since the governing idea behind the movement is trust: trusting God to take care of one's problems, while refraining from any attempts to solve them apart from prayer, while also trusting one's fellow praying mothers and sharing with them one's most intimate prayer needs. For the mothers, however, the issue of disrupting the local religious community through the establishment of small, tightly bound and exclusive groups is seen as problematic with regard to the coherence of the parish community. In most cases, they have therefore agreed to the establishment of only one group per parish, as recommended by the eparchial center.¹⁰⁷

It is interesting that such measures of clerical control are acceptable for most of the Mothers' Prayers groups in Transcarpathia. They do not see themselves as seekers of individual spiritual development or as "believing without belonging" (Davie 1994). The perception of their religious practice as a legitimate Catholic practice is an important part of their religious identity, and in most cases they accept clerical control with little resistance. While they are interested in network-based religion and like the fact that belonging to Mothers' Prayers makes them members of a global network, they still want to be sure that the network is accepted as a *Catholic* network by the church. For the church, they form an important avenue of religious revitalization, but the task of the church remains to ensure that this innovation does not threaten the church's unity as an organization.

¹⁰⁷ An exception to this is the town of Irshava, where there are two such groups. I have analyzed this situation in more detail in Halemba (2011).

Breaking up the Orthodox Imaginary

What is described above seems to undermine in part the broader validity of the concept of the “Orthodox imaginary” developed by Vlad Naumescu (2006, 2008a). His basic argument is that people in western Ukraine combine high levels of religious practice and manifest religiosity with weak commitment to churches as organizations (Naumescu 2008a: 54). People can relatively easily transcend confessional boundaries between churches and transport their practices between them. They see themselves as moving within boundaries of what Naumescu calls the “Orthodox imaginary,” which is based on a tradition of practice and knowledge that the Eastern Christian churches share, regardless of any organizational divisions between the Eastern Catholic and the Orthodox churches. In my terminology, his claims can be rephrased as follows: religious life of the people in Ukraine is highly institutionalized (there are well-established “special paths” for contacts with the divine) and this institutionalization spans beyond frameworks of any organized religion. Religious life is at the same time weakly organized. That is, the religious organizations are not seen as important sources of authority in religious matters. While the continuity of institutionalized religion is seen by believers as crucial for religious life, the religious organizations are seen in a more pragmatic way—it is much more important that I pray as my neighbors and grandfathers have done, than that I pray in a church building and under a leadership of a priest that belong to a specific church organization. The church organization through which I choose to organize, for example, important life-cycle rituals, is chosen not because I believe in its exclusive legitimacy to channel the divine blessing, but because of practical reasons: a given priest charges less for his service, the church building is closer to my home or, last but definitely not least, the ritual can be organized exactly as I wish. As a result, Naumescu claims, approaches that see Ukraine as a “model of religious pluralism among formerly socialist states” (Wanner 2004: 736) do not adequately express what actually happens on the ground. Naumescu holds that the unity of religious practice (institutions) is only superficially divided by the borders of particular churches (organizations). In short, even as religious elites compete with one another, people continue to transport their practices and beliefs from one church to another. He writes:

In spite of attempts at differentiation, the eastern churches in Ukraine are perceived as similar by lay people on the basis of the shared tradition uniting

them. Several traits can be seen as common constitutive parts of the local religious tradition: a cult of Ukrainian saints, particular liturgical music, a liturgical language (which is Ukrainian but in its more orthodox forms can be Church Slavonic), a Marian cult that combines Latin and Byzantine elements, the use of common ornaments, a particular architectural style, the use of religious flags and a Galician iconographic style. (2008a: 66)

Naumescu writes that transcending confessional boundaries and transporting practices and expectations to different churches as different places of prayer works especially well with regard to churches based on the Byzantine liturgical tradition because change from one organization to another does not involve much change in terms of actual ritual practice. According to Naumescu, the basis for this imagined Orthodox religious community lies in the local tradition as an aggregate corpus of beliefs and practices, shared by all believers. In her comments on Naumescu's approach, however, Catherine Wanner (2006) poses some important questions concerning the concept of the Orthodox imaginary. She asks if it is right to suspect, given the perceived commonality that Naumescu depicts, that these churches will eventually unite into one? Is this imaginary shared by the leadership of these churches to a degree that unification would perhaps entail little strain to accommodate new organizational configurations? And is this Orthodox imaginary specific to the Sykhiv region where Naumescu conducted his research, or can it be extended to other regions of Ukraine, to rural locations, or even to Ukrainian communities abroad?

In my opinion, although it may be true that the perception of a basic unity of practice existed and maybe continues to exist in some specific places in Ukraine, such as Sykhiv, it does not necessarily extend to other locations, even in western Ukraine. The situation is diverse and is, moreover, in flux both spatially and temporally. The notion of the Orthodox imaginary could have been a useful tool for the description of the situation in those villages in the Irshava Deanery that switched organizational adherence from Catholicism to Orthodoxy relatively easily in 1949 and back again in the early 1990s, and where underground Greek Catholic priests were barely active. However, those were, by far, not all the villages. Firstly, one of the effects of the work of underground priests was to instill a sense of fundamental difference between Catholicism and Orthodoxy among the believers among whom they worked. Secondly, and even more importantly, both the work of underground priests, as well as the

modes of operations of the organized churches since the collapse of the USRR, resulted in propagation through different church organizations of different special paths of contacts with the divine, i.e., significant differences in the ways in which religious life is institutionalized. As an effect, organizational belonging has become for many Transcarpathians an important matter.

One particular focus around which this sense of difference in organizational religious belonging had been constructed is the person of the Pope: for many underground Greek Catholics, the recognition of the Pope was an important sign of belonging to a specific organizational structure, even in the time of the Soviet Union. In the previous chapter, I discussed the situation of those priests, such as Ilia Sidor, who, while officially serving in an Orthodox parish, were thought to have secretly maintained contacts with the underground Catholic bishops. Interestingly, one question that often surfaced in discussions concerning the position of such priests, and the evaluation of their role as contributors to the survival of the Catholic faith, concerned whom they prayed for during the liturgy. Was it the Pope or the Patriarch of Moscow? Those who saw Ilia Sidor and other such priests as truly Greek Catholic insisted to their interlocutors (including this anthropologist) that the priests mentioned the name of the Pope during divine liturgies. Those who did not appreciate their work (and saw such a secret double adherence to Orthodoxy and Catholicism as morally doubtful) tried to convince everyone that it would have been impossible to mention the Pope. Hence, they mentioned the Patriarch of Moscow, and those priests could therefore not be seen as truly Catholic. All in all, the explicit recognition of the Pope as the head of the church is, for many, one of the most important signs of Catholicism and this is an important indication of difference. Although mention of the Pope's name (or alternatively the Patriarch's in the case of the Orthodox Church) is only a small element in the Divine Liturgy, it is very much noticed by people. Moreover, the Catholic Church in Transcarpathia has now been trying to underscore this difference by making additional mentions of the Pope's name. On important feast days, after the Divine Liturgy, the hymn "At St. Peter's Grave" (*De Petra Sviata mohyla*) is sung, a hymn that is actually a prayer to God and the Virgin Mary to save the Pope. In his March 2005 newsletter (no. 9: 4), Bishop Šašik asked all priests to remember that it is their obligation to sing that hymn with all parishioners on all festive occasions. In his sermon in Rome in 2011, he said he believes that the frequent singing of the hymn is a specific feature of the

Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy.¹⁰⁸ He also advised the priests to recall in their sermons the significance of the Pope's primacy for the unity of the church (*Tsyrkuliar* Mukachivskoi Hreko-Katolytskoi Eparchii 4, 2003: 11). I suggest that the activities of the underground Catholic priests led to the feeling among believers that organizational belonging is important.

Moreover, their underground activities also helped to sustain or even create specific, Catholic "special paths" of contact with the divine, that undermine the usefulness of the notions of Orthodox imaginary as an analytic term for Transcarpathia at the level of institutionalized religion. It seems that at least some of the underground Greek Catholic priests in Transcarpathia not only sustained Catholic devotions during Soviet era, but also introduced new elements among underground believers. For example Pavlo Petro Madiar, who was very active in the Irshava Deanery, even during the Soviet era continued such religious practices as confession on the first Friday of each month and celebrations of the first Saturdays, which cannot be seen as a part of the common Orthodox imaginary for the Eastern Christian population of the region. Some of today's priests who were active participants in the underground movement as children and young adults also told me that the worship of the Virgin Mary of Fatima as a site of resistance to Communism was likewise a part of underground religious life.¹⁰⁹ Some active underground believers also regularly listened to Vatican Radio. As one of those priests told me:

The main message of the Fatima apparitions was known in Transcarpathia even before World War II. And then the efforts of our Transcarpathian bishops and priests and, together with them, other faithful to get rid of Communism with the help of the rosary....And they [underground priests] knew that this prayer, the rosary, is the one that liberates from that, and which has to be prayed for us to be freed from the errors of Russia into which we were placed. We were this Russia! And we understood that, as this Russia had extended its influence here and we existed in the Soviet Union, we were this Russia about which, as we heard, they were talking on Vatican Radio: "Pray for the liberation of Russia from her mistakes!"

¹⁰⁸ See <http://kyrios.org.ua/church/church-and-the-world/3603-bilja-grobu-sv-petra-prozvuchala-podjachna-molitva-vid-zakarpattsiv.html> (accessed March 14, 2013).

¹⁰⁹ The so-called second secret of Fatima contained an explicit call to pray for Russia to abandon her errant path and repent.

Still, despite the influence of underground priests, the main wave of differentiation which led, in my opinion, to the breaking up of the Orthodox imaginary as an institutionalized practice of religious life, even in those places where it might have been present, started after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when organizational churches began to reclaim control over the religious life of the region. It was in this process that the differentiation of religious practice between the Orthodox and the Catholics took place. The notion of the Orthodox imaginary gravely underestimates the power of religious organizations. Agadjanian, Roudometoff and Pankhurst (2005: 9ff) argue that the specific positioning of the Orthodox churches in relation to globality should be seen as directly related to the ways in which such churches were organized and governed, as well as to their specific historical experience, particularly their relationship with the Communist regime. Therefore, the aspects that are crucial to the specificity of Orthodoxy are more organizational and historical, and not philosophical, devotional, or theological. It may be that the Orthodox imaginary, in the sense described by Naumescu, could only arise and be sustained when organized religions lost their grasp on the religious life of believers. Today, however, when the churches try—and to a large extent succeed—to reestablish control over religious life, the notion of the Orthodox imaginary as a way of being a religious person that is dissociated from organizational belonging loses salience.

The Greek Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church in Transcarpathia follow different policies on many levels, which contributes both to a growing perception that organizational belonging matters and to actual differentiation in religious practices. Naumescu mentions that such elements as liturgical music, liturgical language, a Marian cult that combines Latin and Byzantine elements, the use of common ornaments, a particular architectural style, and a specific iconographic style form the basis of this common Orthodox imaginary. In recent years however, both the Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches in Transcarpathia have put a great deal of effort into creating divergence in all those spheres. Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Orthodox and the Greek Catholic church buildings in Transcarpathia do not look the same, people do not dress in the same way when attending services, and both the rhythm of religious practice and the aesthetics of material religion are different. This includes the paintings inside churches, the architecture of the buildings, and the religious paintings adorning individual homes. The melodies of the liturgies that are sung differ; priests are trained to

sing in different ways; and the liturgical language is not perceived the same way. Most importantly, people notice these differences and can clearly express how the atmosphere created through participation in Greek Catholic or Orthodox worship is different.¹¹⁰

This divergence is not the result of a conscious policy of Latinization on the part of the Catholic Church, understood as a goal-oriented attempt to bring the Catholic Church of the Byzantine Rite closer to the Roman Catholic Church in terms of ritual practice. On the contrary, as I have already mentioned in previous chapters, the calls to return and to value Byzantine traditions were heard in the Catholic Church at least from the time of Pope Leo XIII's 1894 encyclical *Orientalium Dignitas*, in which he threatened to suspend any Latin Rite missionary who would advise an Eastern Catholic to transfer to the Latin Rite. In 1964 Pope Paul VI promulgated the decree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, in which we read:

All members of the Eastern Rite should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their legitimate liturgical rite and their established way of life, and that these may not be altered except to obtain for themselves an organic improvement. All these, then, must be observed by the members of the Eastern rites themselves. Besides, they should attain to an ever greater knowledge and a more exact use of them, and, if in their regard they have fallen short owing to contingencies of times and persons, they should take steps to return to their ancestral traditions.¹¹¹

The year 1990 saw the publication of the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, and in the following years, Pope John Paul II repeated on several occasions that the church breathes with two lungs, the Western and the Eastern liturgical traditions. There have been repeated calls to appreciate and return to the

¹¹⁰ I do not develop this line of analysis here, but it is important to mention that the results of my research largely confirm the potential fruitfulness of debate on the role of materiality and technology in religion, which has been developed within the emerging anthropology of Christianity, particularly in works based on fieldwork among Pentecostal believers (Meyer 2010, 2011; Rowlands 2007).

¹¹¹ Paragraph 6 of the *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (see http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_orientalium-ecclesiarum_en.html (accessed March 1, 2012)).

Byzantine Rite in the Eastern Catholic Church, a movement that is documented in ethnography-based literature (Buzalka 2008; Mahieu and Naumescu 2008).

Nowadays, there is no explicit Latinization policy with regard to Eastern Catholic churches. On the contrary, the Greek Catholic Church hierarchy encourages a return to the Byzantine tradition. However, the very fact of belonging to a global, hierarchical, and centralized religious organization transforms Eastern Catholic Christianity in ways that broaden the division between Eastern Catholic Christianity and those branches of Eastern Christianity that are not in communion with Rome. If there is a re-Byzantization of practice underway, the local Orthodox churches do not necessarily serve as the model of Eastern liturgy, architecture, or form of devotion. During the years of my research, at least two important churches of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy were completely repainted in the Eastern style, but with the inspiration taken from Greece and not from the local Orthodox churches. Stephanie Mahieu (2010), while writing about re-Byzantization processes in Greek Catholic churches in Romania and Hungary, claims that the local Orthodox church in Romania provided models for what was considered Eastern Christianity, but in Hungary, due to the lack of a national Orthodox church, inspiration was derived from Greece (Mahieu 2010: 86–97). However, in my opinion, in the case of the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy, the choice of inspiration for re-Byzantization cannot be seen as a matter of convenience, but instead as a political statement. The Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is seen by the Greek Catholic hierarchy in Transcarpathia primarily as the Russian national church—and therefore a political agent—and not simply as a continuation of Eastern Christian tradition. Because of that, Greek Catholics are not able to return to the “true Byzantine Rite” by looking at what happens in local Orthodox Churches because they are seen as having corrupted the tradition for political reasons. When preparing, for example, plans for new church paintings that are to reflect “Eastern traditions,” inspiration is sought in Greece. In this way, the re-Byzantization of the Greek Catholic Church in Transcarpathia paradoxically results in an exacerbation of the aesthetic differences between the Orthodox (of the Moscow Patriarchate) and Catholic ways of being Eastern Christian (fig. 5.5).

This is not to say that differentiation practices can only be observed on the part of the Catholic Church. Rather, an attachment to an organizational center of religion located well beyond the borders of the local community of believers leads to a substantial transformation in religious practice in any case. For



Figure 5.5 New Greek Catholic church in Dolge, May 2007

example, the architecture of newly built Orthodox churches in Transcarpathia does not follow patterns of local architectural style, but rather takes inspiration from or even copies the architecture of the Orthodox churches of Russia, with their golden onion domes and multiple supporting drums (fig. 5.6). One of the Greek Catholic priests from the Irshava Deanery told me that he had proudly presented golden foil that his parishioners had bought in order to refurbish the church's roof to Bishop Šašik during his recent visit to the parish. The bishop was very upset when he saw it and asked the priest sarcastically if he was going to build an Orthodox church in the village, a reference to the perception that golden onion domes are a clear marker of Moscow Patriarchate Orthodoxy. The gold foil then had to be sold off.



Figure 5.6 New Orthodox church being built in Irshava, May 2007

The way in which priests sing the Divine Liturgy is also different in Catholic and Orthodox parishes because the priests are taught to use their voices in different ways. Even when Catholic and Orthodox priests follow the same or similar melodies, the pronunciation of the words and the vocal style is different. The Orthodox priests whom I have heard sing with a rounder and deeper sound that creates a greater difference between singing and speaking than the Catholic priests' singing. The issue of language is also of importance: while the Ukrainian language has been gradually introduced into the Greek Catholic parishes,

Church Slavonic is used in the liturgy of the Orthodox parishes; and I have even heard Orthodox priests preaching in Russian. This is not that surprising if we take into account the fact that many Orthodox priests were educated in seminaries in Russia or in Russian-speaking parts of Ukraine.¹¹²

In recent years, there have also been attempts to remove what are perceived to be Catholic elements from Orthodox churches. Many pre-1949 Greek Catholic churches that were subsequently used by Orthodox communities survived practically unchanged through the Soviet era, with the Stations of the Cross painted on their walls, a cross without a second slanted crossbeam on their roofs, and even with statues of saints or paintings of the hearts of Jesus and Mary. Many of the church buildings also remained unchanged through the first years following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the relegalization of the Greek Catholic Church. It would seem that the churches were being careful not to disturb a common imaginary (which can nevertheless hardly be called Orthodox) that circumscribed legitimate religious practice for believers. Still, in recent years, more and more elements perceived as Catholic have been removed from Orthodox churches. For example, in 2010–11 the crosses atop the Orthodox churches in Dolge and Irshava received slanted bottom crossbeams. In Dolge, images of the hearts of Mary and Jesus on the church wall were also painted over.

Such a re-Byzantization of the Orthodox cannot, however, be reduced to the simple removal of what are perceived as Latin influences. On the contrary, while some Latin influences have been removed, others have now been finding their way into the practice of Orthodox believers. One example of this is the recent proliferation of statues. Statues are usually seen as a clear sign of Catholic Christianity, not to be used in the Eastern Christian tradition (Mahieu 2010). However, several statues have been erected in recent years on the territory of the Irshava Deanery by both Greek Catholic and Orthodox believers. I discussed this issue with Orthodox priests, including the Orthodox dean (*blagochynnyi*) of the region and a high functionary from the Orthodox Eparchy of Khust.¹¹³ While one of them saw the establishment of statues as a legitimate

¹¹² This issue obviously has a clear political aspect. The use of Russian words or Russian pronunciation in Orthodox liturgies and sermons can be interpreted locally as a sign of a political commitment by the Orthodox Church to support Russian influence in Ukraine.

¹¹³ There are two Orthodox eparchies (the eparchies of Khust and Mukachevo-Uzhorod), whose territories are coterminous with the territory that is administered by the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo.

development within Orthodoxy and showed me pictures of statues apparently erected by Orthodox believers in other regions, the other deemed this practice inappropriate. It is interesting, however, that although the practice of erecting statues is not always rejected by Orthodox priests, there is a growing difference between the aesthetics of Catholic and Orthodox statues. For example, Orthodox statues are frequently accompanied by an onion-shaped dome (fig. 5.7). In connection with figures of the Virgin Mary, by far the most common category, one can already speak of two divergent aesthetic styles: Catholic statues clearly allude to the image of the Virgin Mary as established in the series



Figure 5.7 A statue of Christ erected by the Orthodox believers in Irshava, May 2007



Figure 5.8 A statue of the Virgin Mary erected by the Greek Catholic parish in Silce, May 2007

of Marian apparitions beginning at Lourdes (fig. 5.8), while the Orthodox statues repeat a form that is reminiscent of painted icons (fig. 5.9).

A separate research project would be needed to analyze in detail all the changes that have taken place in the religious practice of the Orthodox and Greek Catholic parishes of Transcarpathia in recent years. Undoubtedly some of these changes have been instigated by the politically inspired need for the creation of difference on the part of religious organizations. The Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches remain competitors, even if until fairly recently, at least some of the Transcarpathian believers operated within the “Orthodox imaginary” and the issue of organizational adherence was of no crucial importance to them. However, the issue of differentiation is not only or even



Figure 5.9 A statue of the Virgin Mary erected by Orthodox believers in Bilki, May 2007

not primarily a matter of conscious competitive strategy on the part of the two most important churches in contemporary Transcarpathia. Rather, I see creeping differentiation as a structural outcome, related to the fact that, within the Orthodox and the Greek Catholic churches, priests and lay believers have different sets of resources that provide them with the tools to carry out their religious activities. In other words, when religious organizations regain control over religious life in a given region, the divergences in religious practice appear to be automatic, even if they are not driven by conscious political decisions of the hierarchs.

One good example of this is a comparison of the destinations of the international pilgrimages organized by the Orthodox and the Greek Catholic eparchies in Transcarpathia. In short, while the usual destinations for Orthodox pilgrimages are Jerusalem and Mount Athos, the Greek Catholic Church organizes pilgrimages to a variety of places located mainly in Western Europe that feature Roman Catholic sites and other tourist attractions. I took part in two foreign group pilgrimages from Transcarpathia organized by priests from the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy. The first was a pilgrimage to the Marian apparition site in Medjugorje (Halemba 2011). The second I thought of as "a pilgrimage to Europe": while our official destination was Lourdes, we visited Vienna, Milan, Marseille, Cannes, Verona, Venice, and a few other cities along the way. For many young people, it was an occasion to "see Europe," which they revealed as we crossed the Ukraine-Slovak border and virtually everybody on the bus shouted, "Europe, here we come!" There was also a group of three Orthodox believers on our bus—they joined the pilgrimage upon the recommendation of their Greek Catholic friends. They saw the pilgrimage as a chance to acquaint themselves with Europe and its culture in an affordable way. They emphasized that it was an opportunity they could not get from the Orthodox Church, which does not organize pilgrimages to Western Europe. It goes without saying that during such pilgrimages young Catholics and young Orthodox people see and get inspired by different places and images, and by the priests who accompany them.

An important part of this growing Orthodox-Catholic differentiation is based on a change in the basis of people's self-understanding as participants in religious endeavors, at least on the Catholic side. If we return to Brubaker and Cooper's discussion of identity (2000), we can see that there is a change in the way in which people perceive themselves as religious actors, a change from "groupness" to "connectivity" and "commonality." Viewing oneself as a member of a bounded, localized religious community of practice is being replaced by seeing oneself as connected to others through similar practices and symbols. The pilgrimages can be seen as providing the potential path along which such connections can develop. In a situation in which the local parish was the center and focus of religious life, the allegiance to a given religious organization might have been of minor importance. What difference does it make which religious organization I belong to if I practice my religion together with my fellow villagers and in a manner that does not differ from the ways of our ancestors?

This kind of religiosity is based on a feeling of belonging to a specific bounded group. It is interesting that this focus on belonging to a parish community, which is considered to be the basic organizational structure of the Catholic Church, can apparently lead to a disregard for a broader sense of organizational belonging in terms of religion. Present changes in the religious arena in Transcarpathia indicate that a gradual change is occurring in the way people understand themselves as participants in religion. In the case of Transcarpathian Catholics, their identification with a local, bounded community is supplemented (and in some cases even replaced) by their religious self-understanding as being connected to others through devotions that employ a set of religious symbols, beliefs, and practices defined as “Catholic.” Those symbols and practices are not necessarily grounded in a local religious life understood as a continuation of ancestral ways, but are instead seen as being legitimated through a religious center that is located beyond the immediate locality. Throughout this book I repeatedly state that I see in the region an attempt on the part of organizational religion to reestablish control over religious life over the last twenty years. It does not seem that Soviet socialism diminished interest in religious practices in Transcarpathia, although it did change the relationship between believers and religious organizations. In the case of the Catholic Church, the significance of organizational belonging after the collapse of the Soviet Union grew, but it also changed—from group-based religion, with the parish as the basic unit of religious life, to network-based religion, in which religious life is not organized in groups but through connections.

In an unpublished paper, Kinga Sekerdej (2010) described some of the results of her ethnographic research in an urban Catholic parish in Poland. She said that in the existing Polish academic literature on parish life, parishes are assumed to be communities, without questioning the meaning, scope, and character of what is meant by the word. Her research showed that, in this particular parish, even people who were active participants in parish life were actually participating in particular subgroups within the parish, between which no connections existed. They did not think of the parish in its entirety as a community. Sekerdej conducted research in two such groups, one of which was a parish-based charity that organized activities for children and distributed food and other basic necessities to poor families. This group was run by nuns and supervised by a priest. The head nun and the priest in charge organized and supervised all of the group activities; without their presence and permission

nothing could happen. The group was anchored exclusively within local parish structures and had no connections to similar charities in other parishes.

The other group was known as the Family of Radio Maryja, which is a leading Catholic radio station in Poland. The atmosphere and decision-making processes in that group appeared to be very different. It was also supervised by a priest, but laypeople were deeply involved, even dominating decision-making processes, and they had the feeling that they were the ones who actually decided what activities the group was to undertake. Sekerdej (2010: 19) notes that laypeople "were the initiators of lectures, pilgrimages, masses and leisure activities, such as picnics or sleigh rides organized along with some of the pilgrimages." Tadeusz Rydzyk, the head of Radio Maryja in Poland, is perceived by the mainstream Polish media and the more liberal branch of the Polish Catholic Church as an authoritarian ruler who does not allow for any discussion either on the radio or in its supporting organization (the Family of Radio Maryja). But Sekerdej's research shows that within the group people had the feeling of actually being free in their decision making. They also talked explicitly about "their community," not in reference to their local parishes but the immediate face-to-face community of fellow Family of Radio Maryja members, along with the worldwide community of people listening to and devoted to the station, including a conspicuously large number of Polish emigrants. Sekerdej (2010: 20) observes that "the paradox of their situation was that, although they were part of the most controversial, nationalistic branch of the Catholic Church, considered to be completely obedient to the radio station leadership, they exercised much more freedom in their parish activities than the practical-oriented and seemingly more grassroots charity group."

Sekerdej's research shows that what is perceived by external observers to be a conservative and authoritarian branch of Catholicism can also involve substantial innovation and be perceived by its participants as a way of practicing religion that frees people from clerical control. The members of the Family of Radio Maryja are undoubtedly devoted Catholics for whom belonging to the Catholic Church is of utmost importance. Nevertheless, they perceive the Catholic Church not as a strict structure of management, but as a resource that enables them to exercise their religious life in ways that suit them best, while still being legitimately Catholic. The church thus becomes a tool for legitimation, providing a framework within which religious freedom can be exercised. Sekerdej's description of the Family of Radio Maryja reminds me very much of the ways in which the Brotherhood of the Holy Family in Dzhublyk operates.

It is also a face-to-face community, but one that simultaneously sees itself as part of a global network that is based in part on the cult of apparitions of the Virgin Mary. Religious identification proceeds here through connections to other people and through the common recognition of symbols and practices. We are of the same religion, not because we belong to the same local community of worship, but because we build our religious practice around the same set of symbols, even if those originate far beyond the borders of our local community. The feeling of freedom, despite the authoritarian style of a clerical leader, seems to be similar in the two communities as well. Tadeusz Rydzyk (in the case of Radio Maryja) and Atanasii Tsyipesh (in the case of Dzhublyk) can be seen as signposts that mark the Catholicity both of the respective religious networks and the face-to-face groups. They are actually used as resources that legitimate religious experimentation and the exercise of freedom that takes place within both networks.

Moreover, in his book, Naumescu concentrates on particular people's religious life histories, painting an image of individuals who can change between religious organizations, while still retaining a feeling that nothing has changed with regard to their religious practice—this is then explained using the concept of Orthodox imaginary. In Transcarpathia, however, the notion of the Orthodox imaginary can only be used in the analysis of religious practice at the group level. I have never heard of any individual person who would switch from the Catholic to the Orthodox Church, or the other way around, without attributing some degree of importance to organizational belonging. These “switches” have most often been group events, with whole villages, or significant parts of their inhabitants, deciding to change organizational belonging. This indicates a change in the mode of religious identification—the Orthodox imaginary “worked” in Transcarpathia when adherence to a group with clear boundaries—in other words, to a local community of worship—was of greatest importance. When connectedness becomes the main structuring principle of religious identification, organizational belonging paradoxically becomes more important, as it is the church as organization, and not the local community of worship, that legitimates a given religious practice.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ This results in interesting situations in cases of interreligious marriage. For example, I lived for some time with a family in an almost exclusively Orthodox village, where the wife, born in a different settlement, was a Greek Catholic. She attended the local Orthodox Church because, as she said, she did not want to split the unity of the family and neighborhood. But, at the same time, she strongly insisted that she was a Catholic

In the previous chapter, I contrasted the situation in Vil'khivka with that in Nyzhnie Bolotne during the Soviet era. The latter followed the model of underground religious life, while Vil'khivka's inhabitants were proud of retaining their ancestral traditions within the framework of the Orthodox Church. Despite these differences, however, the religious unity of the local community was of crucial importance for both communities. People in Vil'khivka were proud that the parish as a whole became Orthodox in 1949 and Catholic again in the early 1990s. These changes were presented in their narratives as actually being of no significance, as everything remained the same in their religious practice. They saw the establishment of the Orthodox community in the village at the beginning of the twenty-first century as a more dangerous or even traumatic event for the local religious community. The event was portrayed in local narratives as a division initiated by outsiders—Orthodox missionaries, newcomers to the village, or "Gypsies"—depending on the account. It can be said that these narratives aim at preserving the integrity of religious life by attributing the division to strangers.

In the case of Nyzhnie Bolotne, it is the appearance of Dzhublyk that is seen by some parishioners as the traumatic event. The village, which had seen itself as a bounded religious community, is now divided into people who celebrate mass at Dzhublyk and those who go to the parish church. For the second group, it is of minor importance that the mass in Dzhublyk is equivalent to the mass in the parish according to the rules of the Catholic Church. The unity of religious life in the village is of the greatest importance to them, and attending a Sunday mass in another church, even if it is Catholic, is a threat to such unity. For the devotees of Dzhublyk, however, the mass at Dzhublyk is still a Catholic mass, and they see themselves as pursuing their religious lives in an environment that is more attuned to their needs than a parish church. The reference point in terms of religious identity is not the parish as a local community of religion, but the Catholic Church as a global source of legitimate devotion. They participate in what they perceive as a Catholic devotion whose validity is guaranteed through its place within the global network of Marian devotions, which they see as a part of global Catholic culture. They know that many apparitions of the Virgin Mary are not recognized by the Catholic Church; still, they assert that the many popes have looked at apparitions in a favorable light.

and that she did not wish to change her organizational affiliation. (I thank Catherine Wanner for pointing out to me the importance of interreligious marriage.)

In a sense, allegiance to the Pope is the main feature of Catholicism for the followers of Dzhublyk.

The *Know-How* of Religious Life

Many priests in the Irshava Deanery would throw the English expression *know-how* into conversations conducted in a Slavic language.¹¹⁵ My interlocutors used this English term to describe new approaches and techniques offered and promoted as tools to reinvigorate the faith as well as new management tools suggested by the eparchial center. In short, *know-how* was used to mean anything that was perceived as a new technology related to religious life. Some techniques were seen as having been promoted by the eparchial center, and others as the initiatives of particular priests or believers. The Mothers' Prayers network was described by some of my interlocutors as *know-how*, as were the songs and dances brought from Salesian brothers to Dzhublyk by one of the girls. The neo-catechumenal approaches¹¹⁶ promoted by Bishop Šašik as well as some of the management strategies introduced by him were also described as *know-how*. The most important feature of *know-how* is that it refers to forms of religious practice that are perceived as having their roots outside the local context.

Hence, *know-how* could for example describe the management strategy of Bishop Milan Šašik, who, shortly after his appointment, wanted to regulate and centralize the way in which parish priests were appointed. As I have shown in the previous chapter, lay believers think that they are the ones who should have the decisive voice in religious life in both Greek Catholic and Orthodox

¹¹⁵ As is referenced throughout this book, describing the languages of my interlocutors as Ukrainian, Transcarpathian, Ruthenian, *surzhyk* (a mixture of various Slavic languages), or anything else could be locally read as a political statement. While I do not see a perfect way around this issue, the use of the phrase "a Slavic language" would seem to be the best available choice, especially as I also conducted some interviews in Polish (with Polish Franciscan monks working in the region and Greek Catholic priests educated in Poland) and in Russian (with Russian-educated Orthodox or former Orthodox priests).

¹¹⁶ The Neo-Catechumenal Way is the overarching name of a set of approaches within the Catholic Church, first established in Spain in the 1960s, which aims at the renewed evangelization of baptized adults. It is based on worship in small groups and uses a variety of religious methods not always readily accepted by the Vatican (Santek 2003, 2007).

parishes. I had, for example, a long conversation with the members of one Greek Catholic parish council who claimed that they were always the ones to decide who would be their parish priest. As both an Orthodox and later a Greek Catholic parish, they searched among the priests they knew, tried to obtain information about young priests who were about to finish seminary, and then to convince the chosen candidate to come and serve in their village. As the village was relatively affluent, they had good financial arguments to convince him. After the deal was made, the bishop gave them his blessing. However, the last time they had looked for a priest was in the early 1990s, long before the present head of the eparchy, Bishop Šašik, took his post. While he is a skilled negotiator, he follows a different managerial style from his predecessor, and much different from the Orthodox eparchies as well. In the years immediately after his appointment, he tried to introduce a rule that priests were to be transferred to a new parish every five years, a practice quite common in many Roman Catholic dioceses abroad. Let us remember that Bishop Šašik is a Slovakian-born Roman Catholic educated in Rome and only retrained to become a bi-ritualist later in life. The five-year-service rule was his *know-how* of management, perceived in Transcarpathia as having been brought by him from the Roman Catholic tradition. Gradually, Bishop Šašik came to realize the difficulties that the rule would cause for married Greek Catholic priests who wanted to provide some stability for their families. Their wives were often employed and their children went to school, so frequent changes of parish appointment could cause substantial complications in their family lives, especially as the bishop also urged the priests to live in their parishes' parsonages and not in their own homes in other villages. Gradually, the bishop also came to recognize that people wanted to have a say in choosing their own priests and began to deal with the issue in a diplomatic, but firm, way. As one of the priests told me, when the bishop was approached by parishioners to ask him to appoint a given priest or to remove an old one, he would meet with them and listen to them, but, even if he agreed to follow their suggestions, he would postpone the final decision so that it could be presented as his own independent pronouncement. So, while he abandoned the strict implementation of the five-year-rule and made apparent concessions to the parishioners' need to choose their own priest, he nevertheless maintained his own convictions and indicated through his behavior that the management of the Catholic Church should be top-down.

Bishop Šašik skillfully introduced centralized management strategies in other matters as well. From the very beginning of his term as head of the eparchy, he published a regular newsletter (*Tsyrkuliar*) that was sent to all of the parish priests, in which he informed them of his decisions, clarified details of religious practice, and provided advice on what information should be forwarded to parishioners. In newsletters number nine and twelve, published in 2005, for example, he insisted that all alterations and decisions regarding the architecture, painting, and other matters related to church buildings had to be approved by an architectural commission established by the eparchy. He also provided guidelines concerning the division of cash offerings among the priests, cantors, and others who served at liturgies and other rituals, matters that used to be the prerogative of the parish council. He regulated matters of liturgical practice by, for example, providing priests with detailed prescriptions on how the liturgy should be conducted in the presence of a bishop. He insisted that all priests regularly had to take part in “recollections,” that is, training sessions aimed at their spiritual growth. He was generally considered by the priests to be in favor of what they described as *know-how*, especially the adoption of various techniques derived from the New Evangelization initiative in the Catholic Church that aimed at deepening the faith and enriching the religious lives of the people.

This initiative could be seen as having emerged in the writing of the popes since the Second Vatican Council, but was definitively launched by John Paul II and described in his *Redemptoris Missio* encyclical. John Paul II spoke of three situations in which evangelization was to be carried out. The first was the classical mission to people among whom the Gospel was not known. The second involved work in communities that knew the Gospel and were fervent in their faith. In such communities, the church had to focus on pastoral care. The New Evangelization involves a third situation, often encountered in countries with ancient Christian roots, where “entire groups of the baptized have lost a sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live life far removed from Christ and his Gospel” (*Redemptoris Missio*). For Vásquez and Marquardt (2000: 132), the ultimate goal of New Evangelization is to unify the hierarchical authority of the church and consolidate the clergy’s monopoly on symbolism, something that has to be carried out in a fragmented religious environment and in the face of believers who do not entirely support the authority of the church as an organization. The church replied with a strategy called “inculturation” that is, promotion of the universal

and global Christian message without eradicating local specificities. The authors see this strategy as an instance of "glocalization," a term that had been used in business studies to mean adapting one's practices to local conditions without, however, losing control of what is produced at the local level. Quoting Sassen (1991), they define "glocalization" as "a set of flexible production strategies, which increase the 'local content' of products, and this allows for a rapid response to changing local needs, while facilitating the concentration of management and profits in 'global cities', where transnational companies are based" (Vásquez and Marquardt 2000: 132–33). They apply the concept of glocalization to apparitions of the Virgin Mary in the United States, viewing them as a case of the careful central management of the local. Vásquez and Marquardt see glocalization as a flexible strategy vital to the New Evangelization, a strategy that allowed for the central religious organization to provide the faithful with various technologies of worship, in contrast to the parish-based religiosity that had provided a single model of religious life no longer suited to everyone. What the priests from the Irshava Deanery called *know-how* would be precisely such a set of flexible glocalizing techniques.

However, if Vásquez and Marquardt view the New Evangelization as a continuation of post-Second Vatican Council changes in the Catholic Church, McCallion and Bennett-Carpenter (2012) see it more in terms of introducing a new quality to Catholic religious practice, resulting in the intensification of tensions between the individual and the community. They conducted their research in the United States (Detroit area) and showed how New Evangelization approaches were equated with the individualization of faith in the internal church discussion. Instead of highlighting the understanding of the church as the "People of God" (which was one of the most important results of the Second Vatican Council), the New Evangelization approach emphasizes building a personal relationship with Jesus. Hence, while the inculturation approach (examined by Vásquez and Marquardt as a part of the New Evangelization) has been present in Catholic church policies since the 1960s, the New Evangelization actually can be seen as the next step in the adaptation or transformation of the church—not as an adaptation to "local cultures," but rather to individual needs and the goal of individual salvation. As one of McCallion and Bennett-Carpenter's interlocutors, critical of the New Evangelization, told them, "Now I didn't join the Catholic Church back in the early 1970s for a personal relationship with Jesus. I joined because of the community part of the church. I like the whole sacramental communal part

of Catholicism—that is what made sense to me. It is not about personal salvation but salvation in and through the group, if you will” (2012: 299). It seems that at least in some other cultural contexts outside Transcarpathia, the New Evangelization approaches are perceived as running counter to communality as a mode of religious life in Catholicism.

The techniques of the New Evangelization have, moreover, been employed in Transcarpathia in a situation that, from the point of view of the believers, should be seen as representative of the second, rather than the third, situation mentioned in *Redemptoris Missio*. The Transcarpathian faithful see themselves as fervent Catholics, an opinion also shared by some of the parish priests. Those priests see their main role as providing pastoral care, that is, supporting believers in maintaining their religious life. In this interpretation, there is a very limited need for New Evangelization techniques. However, there are also those among both priests and lay believers who view parish-based religiosity as lacking what they refer to as “living faith.” They are of the opinion that the faith of local communities should be reinvigorated, and that religious innovations are a path to this end. In this sense, the “adaptation to local needs” that is a defining feature of glocalization is too one-dimensional an expression to describe the complexities of this situation. It is not as if local believers had certain types of religious needs that they expressed and that the church tried to satisfy without releasing control over religious life. Such a situation can occur, as it did in the previously described case of the Mothers’ Prayers network. It was a layperson who brought the necessary information and the prayer books to Transcarpathia and who began to organize prayer groups, while the church as an organization reacted to this innovation with negotiations over control of the network. The church “glocalized” the prayer pattern, adapting it in ways that were seen by the bishops as necessary to establish the network as both Eastern and Catholic. However, there are also technologies of religious life that were introduced top-down by church officials, not because the people expressed a wish for such innovation, but because those particular officials thought that particular religious innovations could benefit them as Christians and Catholics.

The core concept here is that of “living faith” (*zhiva vira*), which is often presented in opposition to parish-based religiosity. Labeling someone’s religious life as lacking in “living faith” is a clear moral judgment on their lives as believers. This is used to describe people who do not apparently reflect on their faith, who do not seek out religious experience, but who just go on with their religious lives because their ancestors did so. Interestingly, such a lack of “living

faith" is, from the point of view of many Catholic priests in the region, the reason for the separation of organizational belonging from religious practice, a defining feature of the Orthodox imaginary: if people did not reflect on their faith, they could believe in just anything, as long as it did not contradict their life routines. As one priest told me:

There is a lack of living faith here, you know. They are believers of the kind, many of them, that believe in anything. They believe in God and go to church to pray, but they also believe in superstitions and all kinds of customs that are just human invention. They are believers, but the problem is that they believe in everything.

The present bishop is, as I said above, a supporter of innovations that are aimed at inspiring this kind of "living faith." His particular focus lies in work with children and youth. Especially in comparison with the Orthodox eparchies of Transcarpathia, a great deal of attention is paid to the education of teachers of religion in the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy. There is a special school for them in Uzhhorod, where they are taught techniques involving theater, role play, and teamwork for use in religious teaching (fig. 5.10). Song festivals and competitions on religious themes are also organized for young people, as well as summer camps and international pilgrimages. Most innovations are introduced in bigger cities, Uzhhorod in particular, but they are also able to reach rural parishes, where at least some priests try them out. They look for inspiration in the catechization techniques of the Roman Catholic Church, both in books and also by consulting with those few Roman Catholic priests working in the region, and introduce new visualization techniques, performances, and group exercises. However, not every priest is in favor of these innovations:

It is very difficult for me to talk about this. It is painful for me. First, I am not for all these *know-hows*. Second, everyone wants to introduce something new to the people, something different....But for me the main principle is this: if my grandfather, grandmother, father, and mother grew up and lived with the Our Father prayer on their lips, with the Eucharist, with divine liturgies as they are described in church books, and that was enough for them to save their souls, then why should I, a new person from a new world, destroy all that is part of the tradition of spiritual care in our church and invent

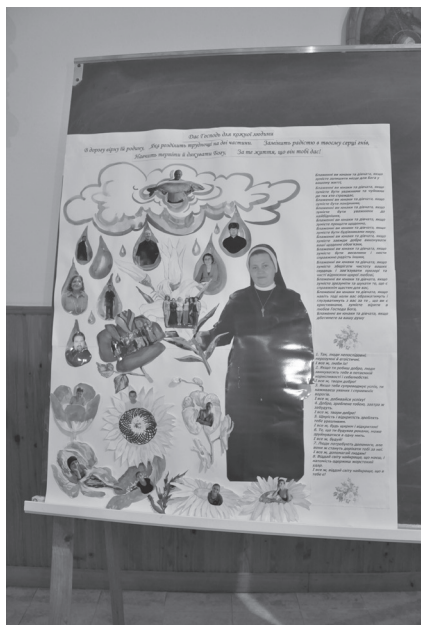


Figure 5.10 A poster used during a seminar for Greek Catholic catechists in Uzhhorod, August 2011



Figure 5.11 Icon of Father Pio in the Franciscan cloister of Eastern Rite in Uzhhorod, June 2011

something new that would actually lead toward the same goal? For me, what is happening in village X¹¹⁷ is strange and alien. I know this New Evangelization takes seventy-year-old women who do not know the multiplication tables well, for whom Ukrainian is a foreign language because they live in their own dialects and with their own traditions that are very old and rich. They have never been further than ten kilometers away from their own villages; they have not seen anything else. Am I now supposed to give them some new religious song, hang a necklace with a heart around their necks, play guitar for them: “La la la, the Lord is waiting for you, the Lord loves you?”...I think that those priests who have introduced the Neo-Catechumenal Movement to their parishes, these new approaches, the Oasis movement,¹¹⁸ they are actually destroying their parishes.

¹¹⁷ For reasons of discretion I removed the name of this village.

¹¹⁸ Light-Life, known also as the Oasis Movement, originated in Poland in 1951 and is targeted mainly at young people with the aim of revitalizing the life of religious

Does this all mean that we are witnessing the renewed Latinization of the Eastern Catholic Church? On the surface, it could appear this way, as most of the religious techniques employed were first developed within the framework of Roman Catholicism. Still, one should be wary of using the concept of Latinization as an analytical framework. It does not seem that the aim of the introduction of these religious innovations is to bring the Eastern tradition closer to the Roman Catholic tradition. The rationale is different: one should be free to use any techniques that are approved by the church and that bring one closer to God. Tradition is understood here as a resource, not as an unchangeable pattern of behavior. The goal is no longer to maintain the faith of one's ancestors, but to come closer to the ultimate religious truth through the Catholic Church. Another favorite approach of Bishop Šašik, of no lesser importance than techniques stemming from the neo-catechumenal approaches, is the search for useful religious techniques from the Eastern tradition. For example, in recent years, he worked to reintroduce the institution of eparchial monks, that is, monks who do not belong to any particular religious order, as is the case in the Roman Catholic tradition, but who are directly subject to the bishop and who can live outside monastic religious communities, for example, as parish priests. Such monks are held in high regard by parishioners, and, according to one such monk, can provide an alternative to those Catholics who consider Basilian brothers to be much too focused on the matters of this world and who would otherwise look to Orthodox monks instead. Another example is the adoption of Western devotional motifs in Eastern aesthetics, for example the cult of the Italian Capuchin monk, Father Pio, known for his stigmata. Icons are now being painted of Father Pio in the Byzantine style and special prayers (*akafist*) are directed to him (fig. 5.11). The icon depicts his stigmata, although those are practically unknown as a sign of holiness in Eastern Christianity.

The issue of the introduction of innovations to religious practice unquestionably requires further research. For my lines of argumentation, it is important to underline that the contemporary Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo is a site of fervent religious experimentation in which religious techniques legitimated by the Catholic Church are being explored. This experimentation leads to the growing division in religious practice between communities that, in the past, might have occupied a common position that

communities, first through a series of spiritual retreats, and then through a special program of permanent pastoral care (Sikorska 1983).

Vlad Naumescu refers to as the Orthodox imaginary. Naumescu bases this notion on a split between organizational belonging and religious practice, as if those could form two separate spheres. In practice, however, organizational adherence influences religious practice because it provides people with a specific set of religious technologies that can be experimented with. In my opinion Dzhublyk is a site of such intense religious experimentation.

Marian Apparitions as Divergent Devotions?

In July 2011, I asked a priest from a village in the Irshava Deanery what influence, if any, Dzhublyk had on his parishioners. He answered:

Our people are always waiting for a miracle. If there is a miracle, they run there immediately to find it. And this is a moment that can be used by a priest, the moment when people run to search for a miracle. One can tell them that God himself is the miracle—run to him and he will bring about such miracles that you will believe, you will be a Christian. If the people run away, you have to follow them wherever they go, you have to tell them, “It is good that you are looking for something!” It is hard when you have to drag people to prayer, and if they like that place [Dzhublyk], and like to pray there, then you just have to go there and preach to them.

Peter Margry (2004: 98) called the network of Marian apparitions a “global network of divergent Marian devotion.” It was described as “divergent” because, according to him, “these divergent or opposing devotions are not shaped within official ecclesiastical structures. Rather, their spirituality and devotional rituals are shaped, profiled and propagated from the bottom up, in an informal manner, with the aid of visionaries, their own cult leadership and related group of devotees.” In my opinion however, the situation involving contemporary apparitional sites is much more complex. While the devotions are not *explicitly* shaped within official ecclesiastical structures, they can be perceived, following Vásquez and Marquardt, as part of subtle glocalization strategies on the part of the Catholic Church. If we look at the movements that developed around the Virgin Mary apparitions, we can see that most of them do not belong to either the category of being straightforwardly rejected or of being straightforwardly accepted by the church. Most of them come

within the “gray zone” of apparitions about which no decision has been taken. In their 2000 article, Vásquez and Marquardt describe the apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Clearwater, Florida, which have been managed by an organization called Shepherds of Christ, an association of priests and laity that does not have a clearly defined and established status within the hierarchical structure of the church, as it is supported by some bishops, but treated with suspicion by others. The movement is neither “inside” nor “outside” of church structures, and this specific position turns it and the site managed through it into objects of negotiation over religious innovation.

In Chapter 2, I described the main guidelines for judging apparitions as outlined in a document entitled “Norms of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the Manner of Proceedings for Judging Alleged Apparitions and Revelations,” which was officially released by the Vatican in recent years. I argued that the main practical task is to establish what kind of influence the site has on the lives of believers, regardless of the veracity of the apparitions themselves. As a bishop from Galicia, who supports Dzhublyk, explained:

As for Dzhublyk and other places like that, it is difficult to say if something [divine] happened there, but let us say that such places unite people, that people pray there, and that this is good. People also can bless (*osviatit*) the place. The Lord is there and he intervenes directly, as in Fatima or in Lourdes; it was clearly God’s intervention that he sent the Mother of God there, but there are other places that...were not necessarily God’s interventions, but were human interventions. Therefore, in Dzhublyk we do not see, we cannot say whether it was God or people who intervened there.

This bishop saw Dzhublyk in a positive light, although he allowed for the possibility that the apparitions themselves did not take place. For him, the most important aspect was that people worshiped at the site in ways that he saw to be beneficial to their spiritual growth. Another priest, an official from the Mukachevo Eparchy who was a Dzhublyk supporter and believed in the veracity of the apparitions, but was, at the same time, an opponent of Father Atanasii, told me:

The apparition here is a blessing, and the people’s prayer is deeper....One soul is created among the people praying, as is one heart; and as in the first [Christian] community, the prayer works better. People sense God more than

in churches. Not in all churches but, unfortunately, in some churches, the Divine Liturgy has become just a stereotypical form, focusing on secondary matters. There is too much noise and the atmosphere is not conducive to concentration. This is very disturbing for those who need pure prayer, and who need to concentrate. Dzhublyk is a mecca for those who want to seek God in their lives, a place where they can escape from damaging forms of public worship and really spread the wings of their spiritual lives in prayer. There is a Marian blessing there, a prayer is created to be remembered for a long time and people want to return there again and again.

More often than not, commissions that are established to investigate a given apparition are active for a very long time without issuing any final statement. This is, in my opinion, not primarily a matter of doubting the veracity of apparitions themselves; rather, this postponement of the final decision is an attempt to maintain a given site as a site of religious experimentation, with the option of closing the case if the experiments veer off in a direction that can no longer be accepted by the religious organization. For example, in Lishnia, near Drokhobych in western Ukraine, the apparition site was declared unworthy of worship when the visionary announced that the Virgin Mary saw the contemporary Greek Catholic Church as being devoid of the Holy Spirit. Such a declaration clearly removes all possibility for further negotiation and experimentation.

Is the mass celebrated at Dzhublyk the same as the mass celebrated at the parish church? The answer to this question depends on what people expect from participation in religious life and the way in which they define themselves as religious. The followers of Dzhublyk are not enthusiasts of individualization in religious life, understood as a focus on one's personal relationship with the divine along with a disregard for the social significance of religion. Both those who remain with their parish church and those who prefer Dzhublyk as their site of regular worship are interested in social aspects of religion. However, while for the former the basis of social religion is the bounded parish community, for those at Dzhublyk, belonging to an imagined Catholic community centered on the Pope as the representative of God on earth is of greatest importance. While these perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they can still lead to mutual exclusion.

It is interesting that sometimes the accusations leveled locally against the followers of Dzhublyk take the same form as those that, according to the

narratives of former underground Greek Catholic believers, were voiced by their neighbors who had decided to participate in Orthodox liturgies under the Soviet regime. Both *dzhublikovskie* and underground Greek Catholics were judged as people who had abandoned their local religious communities, their parish churches, and had gone off to pray "in the bush." In both cases, this is a pejorative evaluation of those who leave their local religious communities centered on well-known and established places of worship to practice their religious lives in ways that are no longer focused to the same extent on the local religious community.

There are actually points in common in the religious lives of the Dzhublyk followers and the underground Greek Catholic Church. In both cases, religious life centers not on participation as a continuation of the religious tradition of local communities, but as a part of a global culture of belief and practice, confirmed by the authority of the Catholic Church. The priests serve as signposts and moral authorities in the process. As I have shown in the previous chapter, the underground believers conducted their religious practices under the guidance of underground priests, who were seen by their followers as exceptional in terms of morality and religious devotion. At the same time, it was important for the believers to belong to the global community of Catholics, a community demarcated in terms of devotion to the Pope and the use of specific religious techniques such as the rosary, the Stations of the Cross, and veneration of the hearts of Jesus and Mary, which differentiated them from those who stayed within the available organizational framework—in this case the one provided by the Orthodox Church. However, the veneration of the Pope and listening to Vatican Radio were probably the clearest markers of Catholicism, as the devotions mentioned above could obviously also be practiced by people who attended the Orthodox Church. The important landmarks of religious identification (as Catholics) for the underground believers were the underground priests, who were seen as those who remained faithful to the Vatican, despite all adversity. Father Atanasii is in a similar way a landmark of religious identification for Dzhublyk believers, as he epitomizes priests devoted and faithful to the call of the Virgin Mary despite all adversity. At the same time, it is the Vatican, and most importantly the Pope, which serve as symbols of the veracity of the faith of Dzhublyk followers, the same symbols that sustained the faith of the underground believers through the Soviet era. It is significant that, shortly after the initial apparition, a trip to the Vatican was organized for the visionaries and main figures related to the apparitions.

The fact that the Pope blessed the girls served as a confirmation of the legitimacy of the Dzhublyk followers' commitment to the apparition site, regardless of any difficulties they may have encountered in connection with the local church hierarchy and local community, and despite the fact that such an individual blessing has nothing officially to do with any recognition of the apparitions as genuine. The religiosity at Dzhublyk does not fit into the Orthodox imaginary understood as the commonality of a certain religious practice. While the Divine Liturgy is indeed conducted according to the Byzantine Rite, the overall atmosphere of the place, created through the music that is sung (and played) during and after the liturgy, through people's appearance, through the way the priests speak, through the insistence on individual confession, and through references to the global Catholic culture of Marian devotion, make this place a *Catholic* place of worship. Dzhublyk is an extreme case of the differentiation that is taking place between the Greek Catholic and the Orthodox churches.

I showed in the previous chapter that the Greek Catholic Church, as an organization, does not have full control over religious life at the parish level, nor does it have substantial controlling power with regard to network-based religion. However, the role of the Catholic Church is significant in that it serves people as a repository of legitimate resources for religious practice. Being Catholic is signified not by obedience to the parish priest or even to the local bishop, but by acknowledgement of the primacy of the Pope, located far away in the Vatican. This is not a case of "believing without belonging"; people want to belong, but the meaning of belonging changes. It no longer means being a member of a local religious community that sees itself as a unit within the organizational structure of the Catholic Church. It means choosing those religious practices, images, and beliefs that are thought to be legitimated through the Catholic Church, even if they are not rooted in local tradition.

Following the line of argumentation presented by Vásquez and Marquardt, it is possible to claim that the Catholic Church remains undecided about most of the Virgin Mary apparition sites (they are still "under consideration") not because church officials do not have enough material to decide on the veracity of the Virgin Mary's messages, but because the sites serve as fields of religious experimentation in which methods of religious revitalization are investigated without posing a threat to the organizational, hierarchical, and centralized structures of the church. I disagree with Peter Margry (2004), who describes the apparitional networks as bottom-up, divergent, and indeed conservative.

The power of such networks lies precisely in the fact that they are not so easily classified. While they clearly support traditional family values and are often breeding grounds for strong anti-abortion movements, from the point of view of the devotees, they offer a range of methods of devotion that are innovative and that open up new, exciting possibilities for the building of religious networks that are adaptable to different contexts. Moreover, they cannot be viewed as clear bottom-up initiatives, as they are integral to the broader inculturation policy of the Catholic Church. The changes following the Second Vatican Council are most often presented as the church's response to societal transformations, as attempts to adapt the church to the world. However, those policies and techniques have continued to be propagated through the same old channels of organizational religion. Dzhublyk is by far not the only source of new religious practices within the contemporary Catholic Church in Transcarpathia; it is both a symptom and a tool of religious innovation.

In more general terms, the use of modern technologies and the organization of religious life through networks not bound to any particular location is characteristic of a religiosity that is related to the apparitions of the Virgin Mary, as is clearly demonstrated in the works of De la Cruz (2009), Hermkens (2012), and Vásquez and Marquardt (2000). What all these studies have in common is the realization that the parish is not the only basic structure of Catholic religious life. The Catholic Church understands this as well, and thus allows for experimentation within the growing religious network of Marian devotion.

Conclusion: Marian Apparitions as Sites of Transformation

I started this book with an outline of a three-level approach to religious phenomena: as experiences, as institutions, and as organizations. In the main body of the book I have focused on the interaction between religious organizations and religious institutions, paying particular attention to the process of organizational embracement of religious practices. Experiences deemed religious (Taves 2009) remained implicit throughout this study, simply by virtue of the very theme of the book—the apparitions of the Virgin Mary and other holy figures at Dzhublyk. Religious experiences are considered by many researchers to be the essential basis on which subsequent institutionalization and organizational embracement take place. Adoption of the cognitive approach to religious phenomena allowed me to focus on relations between religious institutions and organizations, as well as on the significance for organizational religion of experiences interpreted by some as direct divine interventions, but without making any assumptions concerning the character of these individual experiences. As I explained in the Introduction, in the cognitive approach religious experiences are treated not as a special category of experience, but as something that emerges due to certain features and mechanisms of human cognition that are not limited to the religious sphere. Visions and other sensations that form the basis of apparitional phenomena acquire their religious interpretation on a social level and are not characterized by anything intrinsically “religious.”

I have treated the local categorization of experiences as religious as a way to produce focal points that can lead to revelations regarding the most pressing issues within the religious field. In the introduction to a special issue of the journal, *History and Anthropology*, devoted to divine intervention, Galina Valtchinova writes that, based on anthropological works which analyze recourse to one or another kind of supernatural power, it is easy to conclude

that divine intervention is sought especially in situations where human agency fails to produce the desired effects (2009: 210). She gives as examples anthropological works on magic, sorcery, and witchcraft, set mainly in post-colonial contexts (Geschiere 1997; Kapferer 1997; Meyer and Pels 2003; Moore and Sanders 2001) that locate “occult economies” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999) within global political, economic, and social flows. In my work, I show that direct interventions of the divine are especially important moments for organizational religion. In particular, the apparitions of the Virgin Mary of Dzhublyk can be seen as a voice in ongoing discussions in Transcarpathia that concern the role of religious organizations in national projects (Chapter 3), relations between religious organizations, lay believers, and their communities (Chapters 4 and 5), and ways in which religious life can be legitimately executed by lay believers (Chapter 5). The modern Marian apparitions are especially fascinating in comparison to other kinds of miracles, veneration of relics, sacred springs and so on simply because the Virgin Mary is reported to talk during the apparition events, often explicitly commenting on local and global problems. Through these apparitions the divine is not only thought to confirm its presence and power, but also to directly advise on the ways in which people should live their lives.

The apparitions of the Virgin Mary of Dzhublyk are a case of divine intervention being sought in a situation where discussions and conflicts among human partners are locked in a stalemate. Through recourse to a holy figure, the discussions have been brought onto another level—the conversation is no longer between a local branch of a religious organization, legitimized through its placement within hierarchical global structures, and a group of people who disagree with its positions, forming their own religious institutions and negotiating the level of their organizational embracement. The conversation is now between the organization, which claims to represent or embody sacredness, and the transcendental power itself, accessed through direct experiences deemed religious. The experiences of divine intervention are transformed into institutionalized paths of contact with the divine. Within this process, some types of experiences are defined as religious, while others are dismissed as inappropriate, mistaken or, if acknowledged as supernatural, of Satanic, rather than divine, origin. Those direct interventions and their institutionalizations are powerful arguments in discussions with and within organized religion. When questioned about his defiance of the decisions of the bishops, Father Atanasi, the manager of Dzhublyk, often ends the discussion with a question

that, according to him, is the most important one: Whom should I obey, the church as an organization, or God and his emissaries? In this way, he creates an opposition that, according to the religious organization, does not have a right to exist—after all, we are talking about the Catholic Church here, which not only has the authority to channel the voice of God, but also claims to hold a monopoly on it.

Still, what is the Catholic Church? Even within official church structures, ecclesiological disputes on this matter abound and are contingent on historical, political, and social circumstances. Over the years, different understandings of the church have come to the fore. But, at the same time, other understandings are never completely erased; they may be temporarily eclipsed, but they always remain in the background, ready for mobilization when conditions change either at the local level or at the level of the highest church authorities. The resolutions of the Second Vatican Council are often seen as a move away from the strict hierarchical church and toward its communitarian aspects—the church as the People of God and a community of all believers and collectives, rather than a cabal of powerful individuals as decision makers (Wenzel 2007). The more recent New Evangelization approach is in turn seen as a step toward an understanding of the church as a path to individual salvation, where religious collectives take a back seat to personal religious needs and goals (McCallion and Bennett-Carpenter 2012). But the changes in understanding what the church is do not simply follow each other in temporal succession. On the contrary, the various meanings of the church always remain as a resource that people can mobilize for strategic purposes. The church is the Body of Christ, the People of God, Our Mother, a hierarchical organization, and a soteriological mystery, to name but a few; and each of these understandings can be brought to the fore in structuring different kinds of arguments in different historical and political contexts.

The understanding of the church as the only organizational structure legitimated by transcendental power is one of the most important features of Catholicism, responsible, in my opinion, for many of the unique characteristics of this denomination. In an interview with Vittorio Messori, Cardinal Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, said that for Catholics only the façade of the church is built by people, but behind this façade there are structures made by God, therefore immovable and permanent (Messori and Ratzinger 1985: 45). In this way, he reminded believers that the church's hierarchy is willed by God, and that the will of God cannot be separated from the religious organization. This statement, in turn, reminds us that, although Catholics around the world

live their religious lives in a variety of forms, at the same time, through their identification with the Catholic Church, they submit to the influence of the organizational structures of charismatic bureaucracy, which aim to establish the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable religious life, including religious experimentation. People do not have to agree with particular decisions of the church's officials; they can contest their assessments and sometimes they have at their disposal powerful means through which they can negotiate with church representatives. Still, through their acceptance of the religious organization, they open up paths along which this organization can and does influence their religious lives.

On the other hand, they can also tap into the symbolic capital and other types of resources legitimated through this organization. Religious practices within contemporary Catholic movements, including Marian apparitions such as those at Dzhiblyk, bring to mind notions suggested by sociologists analyzing church spirituality (e.g., New Age movements) such as "bricolage" (Luckmann 1967); "pick and mix religion" (Hamilton 2000); or the "spiritual supermarket" (Lyon 2000). This approach to new religious movements focuses on believers' apparent freedom to choose which symbols, practices, and discourses to adopt. Nevertheless, the organizational religion is still a crucial point of reference for believers, a framework that they do not want to let go. Intriguingly, some works on New Age movements and other such "non-churched" spiritualities also underline that participants move within a common conceptual framework in which "individuality" and "lack of organizational rules" form an important part of their narrative strategy of self-definition, but do not accurately reflect the reality of these practices, which tend to be group-based and rule-bounded (Aupers and Houtman 2006; Potrata 2004). The difference between such non-churched movements and the ones that define themselves as belonging to the Catholic Church is that the latter's participants, while highly valuing "spiritual growth," "individuality," and "personal experience," choose as a legitimating resource a world religion that can be characterized as a centralized and hierarchical charismatic bureaucracy. The feeling that one is a Catholic believer is here constitutive of the choices one makes in the realm of personal religious practice. In this sense, the Catholic Church becomes a repository of symbols and practices that are used to construct one's own spirituality, which is still nevertheless understood as "personal" and "based on experience."

In his 2001 book, *Transnational Catholicism in Postcommunist Europe*, Timothy A. Byrnes asks a rhetorical question: What institution (organization in my vocabulary) beyond the Catholic Church can involve itself at all levels of postcommunist politics: at the systemic level through the role and influence of the Holy See; at the national level through the episcopal conferences mandated for each particular nation; and at the individual level through the actions of the Pope and influential bishops and also through the faithful lives of the millions of Catholics? The existence of the Holy See and the special status granted to it in an international arena otherwise dominated exclusively by nation-states affords the Catholic Church a level of political participation that is not accessible to any other religious organization. In the case of the apparitions at Dzhublyk, for the mode of accommodation of the experience of the visionaries and pilgrims, it is important that the main organization that lays claim to the site is led by a Catholic bishop very much conscious of his belonging and his obligations to the global Catholic Church.

Moreover, the Catholic Church occupies a specific position in the international arena because it is a *religious* organization. Werner Stark, a Catholic sociologist, argues that the Catholic Church is an example of “collective charisma” (1965). Max Weber’s understanding of charisma was long interpreted as a personal one that could take two different forms: the genuine charisma of a prophet, derived from his personal qualities (attributed to him by his followers or, rather, created in interaction with them [Csordas 1997]); and the priest’s “charisma of the office,” granted to him through organizational channels (Weber 1968, 1978). In his criticism of Weber’s routinization of charisma, Stark presents a vision of the Catholic Church as the organizational guardian of saints and mystics. According to Stark, in the process of routinization, charisma does not have to be replaced by bureaucracy; bureaucracy can instead develop to guard charisma in a fruitful dialectical relationship. Stark presents a vision of the Catholic Church as a line of saints and mystics that is protected and guided by the church bureaucracy.

Without institutions there cannot be individuals, and without priests there can hardly be saints. Saints...emerge out of an ongoing stream of tradition. They may turn against the tradition, they can change it inside out, they may revolutionize it, but they yet presuppose it, as the child presupposes his parents and the institution of the family. A family is more than a husband and wife:

it is a union with the purpose of producing offspring. The Church is more than a number of priests: it is a number of priests with the purpose of producing saints. (Stark 1969: 164)¹¹⁹

In any discussion concerning innovation in religious practice, the church has a powerful argument on its side: it claims to be the only legitimate pathway for the transmission of the divine will.

The views of my interlocutors from among the Catholic clergy can be roughly divided into two positions: some priests see the church precisely as Stark sees it—as an administrator and manager of charisma and as a carrier of charisma itself; others see charisma as a force independent of church structures. For the first group, the church, with its bureaucratic structures, is the highest good and embodiment of holiness. They are the ones who tell you that the church is about hierarchy, and insubordination is one of the gravest sins. One can summarize what they are saying in a following way: If you want to be a good priest, you have to constantly ask yourself, “Is what I am doing beneficial for the church? If I am going to criticize a bishop, could I be harming the church in the process? Because if I harm the church, I attack the divine itself.” Those are the ones who do not see the veracity of the Virgin Mary’s intervention as a main concern of the church, with regard to Dzhublyk and other apparition sites. The verse from the scriptures that would best represent this perspective is: Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them (Mt 7:20). And the fruit is the well-being of the church, to quote Ratzinger again, as structures made by God, therefore immovable and permanent (Messori and Ratzinger 1985). All that matters is that the development of a new pilgrimage site ultimately strengthens the church.

Those who take the other position see charisma as a feature of a power independent from and not subordinate to church structures, that has to be followed at any cost, even at the cost of the church as an organization. For them, the most important thing is God and his will, and if the church as an organization does not seem to follow God’s will, they feel it is their obligation to rebel. In this rebellion, transcendental figures can be the most important allies, resources mobilized to challenge the organizational structures of the charismatic bureaucracy, of which those powers themselves are considered to be the founders. This argumentation is often based on a kind of syllogism that, in the case of Dzhublyk’s call for the unity of Ukraine, can be summarized as

¹¹⁹ As quoted in Gresham 2003: 15.

follows: Things that the Virgin Mary says are good; the Virgin Mary says things concerning Ukrainian unity; therefore, Ukrainian unity is good. Both premises of this syllogism can be called into question, but questioning the former, in particular, is very difficult in practice in the Catholic context. In his article about the holy figures that appeared to a Canadian seer, Edward Berryman (2005a) uncovered the discursive practices that result in conflating the vision with the holy figure, and that lead to a situation in which rejecting the vision can be interpreted as rejecting the holy figure itself. This corresponds also to the position of many of my lay interlocutors—it was extremely difficult for people to say that they do not believe that the messages delivered by the visionaries at Dzhublyk in fact came from the Virgin Mary, even when they pointed out many contradictory or disturbing features of the apparitions. It is as if rejecting the messages is tantamount to rejection of the Virgin Mary herself, even though the Catholic Church does not require that its members show devotion to, or even belief in, church-approved apparitions.

As a Catholic, if one does not accept what an apparition of the Virgin Mary is reported to have said or done, one must argue quite carefully against a specific aspect of that particular apparition. This must be done without questioning the principle of apparitions in general, established in the Catholic world at least since the mid-nineteenth century, according to which the divine can intervene directly in this form of private revelation. Moreover, arguing against apparitions can be seen as arguing against experience, and how can you argue against that? I remember a conversation between two women, both supporters of Dzhublyk and believers in apparitions of the Virgin Mary in general, concerning those who do not think that the Virgin Mary appears and delivers messages. One of the women said, “What do you want? If you are a non-believer, the Virgin Mary can stand right in front of you and you will not see her anyway.” This statement confirms what some anthropologists and other researchers have already observed: that people believe because they experience the presence of the divine, and for them that experience equals evidence (Holbraad 2008). How can you argue against someone’s direct and personal experience of divine intervention? In most situations you do not have to and, especially as a researcher, it is best avoided. Still, if you are a leader of a religious organization, and your authority and decision-making prerogatives are challenged by someone who claims to have experienced the divine directly, you are forced to negotiate.

This difficult position of a religious organization vis-à-vis the experience of direct divine intervention is particularly precarious in the post-Soviet context. As I have argued throughout this book, religious life in the Soviet Union was not eliminated, but it was profoundly transformed in specific ways. Among the adherents of the Greek Catholic Church, forbidden and/or heavily persecuted in most of the countries of the Soviet bloc, those transformations were largely related to the activities of lay believers and underground priests in a situation where organizational structures practically ceased to exist and therefore could not supervise religious life. This was, however, not “believing without belonging,” in Grace Davie’s sense (1994), where people maintain a keen interest in religious experience while ceasing to appreciate organizational and sometimes, although less often, institutional religion as well. In the case of Transcarpathian Greek Catholics, at least those who admitted underground priests into their homes or led their religious lives altogether without clergy, religious organization was transformed into a distant, but important, point of attachment and reference and a largely virtual source of legitimization. It was a very important symbolical resource, despite the fact that it was not expected to have much practical influence in everyday religious life. People appreciated the church as an idea and as an ideal, epitomized in the figure of the Pope and, more locally, underground priest-martyrs, often miracle workers. However, at the same time, they did not think that this organization should have any direct influence on local practices and decisions related to religious institutions on the ground. The activities of underground priests contributed greatly to this situation, as the veneration of underground priests in the Irshava Deanery clearly attests. They were and still are treated as holy figures, exemplars of morality and devotion, who have to be protected, respected, and cared for. Still, they are seen as individual sacred figures much more than as functionaries of the church as an organization. The “belonging” that was important for Catholic laity in Soviet times and in the early post-socialist years can be better defined as a commitment to a local religious community with a far-away point of anchorage—the Vatican. Dzhublyk, on the other hand, represents a further transformation of religious life in Transcarpathia, where people are still committed to this far-away point of reference, but become less committed to the local religious community, understanding their religious lives as a search for personal religious experience, rather than as a commitment to local social institutions.

Even so, religious organizations do not simply surrender and quietly leave the scene. Their officials go to great lengths to reclaim religious institutions and experiences that flourish outside or at the edges of their organizational borders. In the Transcarpathian context, this reclaiming gradually leads to breaking what Naumescu (2008a) calls the Orthodox imaginary as a commonality of religious practice. This breaking results in the gradual creation of separate Orthodox and Catholic communities, and networks that are highly conscious of their differences. They differ not only because people are conscious of belonging to different religious organizations, but also because their actual religious practices diverge. The Orthodox and Catholic Churches provide their followers with different sets of religious technologies that result in a material manifestation of the differences between these religious communities. On the side of the Catholics, this can no longer be called a Latinization process, as it was in previous centuries, since the center of the Catholic religious organization at the moment actually advocates the re-Byzantization of its Eastern branch. Still, this Catholic re-Byzantization does not bring Greek Catholics closer, in terms of religious practice and materiality, to their local Orthodox counterparts. The main churches in Mukachevo and Khust have recently been repainted in the Byzantine style, but inspiration was taken from Greece and not from the local Orthodox churches. I do not think that this re-Byzantization strengthens the Orthodox imaginary; on the contrary, re-Byzantization policies can also create differences between the Orthodox and the Catholic at the local level.

Stephanie Mahieu (2010) quotes a Hungarian Greek Catholic priest who expresses his perplexity over the Vatican-instigated policy of re-Byzantization, seeing it paradoxically as an indication of a Western way of thinking: by encouraging a return to a “true Eastern tradition,” the Vatican promotes the uniformity of such a tradition. This, according to this priest, goes against the very mode of existence of Eastern Christianity, which is an assembly of deeply localized churches (Mahieu 2010: 85). However, the Greek Catholic Church is not among the assembly of such deeply localized Eastern churches, but is, rather, a part of a globalized and centralized Catholic Church. This is a fact of crucial importance and one that should make us wary of arguments promulgating understandings of the situation of the Greek Catholic Church that are based on its belonging to Eastern Christianity.

The fact that most of the highest hierarchs of the Greek Catholic Church in the region where I conducted my research were actually educated in Catholic

establishments that are of Latin tradition should not be overlooked. Such is also the opinion among Greek Catholic clergy in Slovakia and Ukrainian Transcarpathia. I discussed this issue with employees of the Center of Spirituality East-West in Košice (Slovakia), which provides a forum for discussions concerning the history and present state of Western and Eastern Christian traditions. My interlocutors pointed out that, in fact, all the heads of the Greek Catholic churches in the region were educated in Latin religious establishments: Jan Babjak, head of the Archbishopric of Prešov, is a Jesuit; Milan Chatur, head of the Košice Eparchy, is a Redemptorist; the present head of the Mukachevo Eparchy in Ukraine, Milan Šašik, a member of the Lazarites, is a bi-ritualist, first trained in the Latin Rite and only later retrained to conduct liturgies according to the Byzantine Rite. Although both Redemptorists and Jesuits have Eastern branches, my interlocutors doubted that they are accustomed to or deeply committed to Eastern ways of thinking about ritual, person, or community. One of them told me in a conversation in Košice in May 2007, “There is a problem that Jesuits, for example, do not have houses other than Latin ones.”¹²⁰ Hence, although we have Greek Catholic Jesuits, they always have to live among Jesuits, and this means they live according to the Latin way of thinking. This is a huge problem.”

What my interlocutor was concerned about was not a negative attitude among hierarchs toward re-Byzantization—in fact, this trend is generally supported by the present bishops. His concern was that re-Byzantization cannot be thoroughly carried out by Latin-educated church officials, even if they are knowledgeable about Eastern theological concepts. The organizational entanglement of the Greek Catholic Church is not in a “global structure of local churches” (Hann and Golz 2010), but primarily in a globalized Catholic Church that is dominated by its Latin branch, and this entanglement has its effects in terms of religious practice on the ground.

In a situation of ongoing transformation within the field of Catholic religious life, apparition sites can be looked at as sites of religious experimentation. The Catholic Church allows for religious experimentation within and on the verges of its organizational structures, as in the case of monasteries described in Chapter 5. In their introduction to a recent volume on contemporary religiosities, Bruce Kapferer, Annelin Eriksen, and Kari Telle see in general

¹²⁰ Monasteries that organize the lives of their members according to the Latin and/or Jesuit tradition are commonly referred to as “Latin houses” or “Jesuit houses.”

religions as sites of often radical social and political experimentation. "Religious domains are, we consider, *par excellence* the space of the creative and experimental imaginary of human beings upon their existential realities" (2010: 9). In this book I have tried to show how visions can be imagined into life, but also how religious organizations deal with and direct such processes. The apparitions of the Virgin Mary in post-socialist Ukraine are here seen as ways of reshaping religious life in a situation where religious organizations are restating their claims upon the religious lives of local people and trying to direct changes in such a way that religious experiences and religious institutions are both accommodated in organizational forms.

Among my interlocutors, both laity and clergy, I found many constellations of attitudes toward Dzhublyk. There was, however, one striking difference between the clergy and the laypeople that came to me as quite a surprise: although, in both groups, there is a great diversity of responses to Dzhublyk, it seems to me that only for clergymen is there a definitive split between, on the one hand, concern with the veracity of the apparitions and, on the other hand, assessing the significance of Dzhublyk for religious devotion and as a place of cult and pilgrimage. Among the laity, those two concerns and judgments seem to become united—if the apparitions really happened as narrated, it means that the religious devotions developing there should, at the end of the day, be beneficial, despite all the intermittent turbulences. And, conversely, if the apparitions did not really take place, the devotions at Dzhublyk cannot be beneficial. Still, among the clergy, the attitudes were more complex, and the difference between false, understood as fake, and false, understood as incorrect, was clearly marked. Among the clergy I met, there are those who believe that the Virgin Mary really is present in a special way at Dzhublyk, but also believe that the site cannot give beneficial results because of the way it is managed. There are also those who think that the apparitional events may actually have been made up, but still believe the site is beneficial for religious life. Contrary to the assumption underlying many previous works concerning apparitions, the priests in general, including the members of the church commission whom I interviewed, were not interested in establishing whether the Virgin Mary had in fact appeared there or not. Even those who were positively disposed toward this apparition, for a variety of reasons, expressed the feeling that it was not of crucial importance to establish the veracity of the apparitions. What is of importance are the fruits of the apparitions, meaning the effects they have on for the faith of the believers and the position of the church as an organization.

Moreover, for the laity, it is the experiences that are of principal concern, be they of the visionaries or of the pilgrims. Pilgrims can be viewed as a secondary cohort of seers; it is their own direct experience of the extraordinariness of the place that is important: the miracle of the sun, the smell of Dzhublyk, signs in the clouds, the lights in the woods, healings and conversions, interactions with a visionary. What Badone writes about negotiations over apparitions in Kerizinen is more important for the laity than for the clergy at Dzhublyk:

If indeed the Virgin Mary has appeared here, this is sacred ground, a place where Heaven has touched the earth and may do so again. From the believer's perspective, the contested character of such sites emanates naturally from their status as loci for cosmic battles between good and evil. As people explained to me, at places like Kerizinen where God and the Virgin are powerfully present, the Devil will also be especially active, fomenting conflict to undermine the divine promise of life-giving redemption. (Badone 2007: 468)

For the laity, the experiences are the most important, and the conflicts surrounding the site cannot devalue them. For the clergy, on the other hand, the actions of humans can actually undermine the legitimacy of the divine intervention.

The Catholic Church as a religious organization attempts to control the experiential power of apparitional events. By explicitly saying it is of no significance whether a Christian believes in or rejects private revelations such as Marian apparitions, the church turns Marian apparitions into non-events, that is, episodes of no consequence. It may well be, as Joel Robbins (2007) says, that anthropologists often try to see continuity in Christian lives where there is, according to the people concerned, a rupture. Still, they are not alone there—the contemporary Catholic Church itself has a problem with the experience of dramatic change and rupture on the part of its members. Therefore, the church tries to convince people that, in some cases, their beliefs and experiences are of no consequence. The rupture is washed out of the picture—the apparition can be judged as authentic, only if everything stays the same. Moreover, the Catholic Church is largely uninterested in the veracity of apparitions. It is as if the church were saying that, although one might think it was of crucial importance that the Virgin Mary appeared, it was not. What the church finds really important is continuity of organizational control over religious experiences and institutions. Direct interventions of the divine are extremely

important moments for organizational religion, but not because of the nature or the authenticity of the interventions in and of themselves. They are moments in which religious organizations do not simply have the opportunity to prove their regulatory powers in the religious field, but, indeed, moments when they must do so to maintain their legitimacy and relevance. They have to restate their position as the only body that has a right to decide which experiences are religious and which are not.

For the social sciences, therefore, the important question in analyses of religious apparitions should not be how an individual experience becomes institutionalized and instrumentalized, but how experience becomes a tool for negotiation and transformation in the religious field. In each particular case of apparitional phenomena, there might have been the initial personal experience of the visionary, but there equally well might not have been. Regardless of the nature of the initial event that motivated the development of a given apparitional movement, apparitions are about experiences, institutions, and organizations that mobilize and transform one another in a process of discussion and negotiation. From this perspective, the work of the church commissions that tend to focus on the *effects* of apparitional phenomena rather than on their *origins* could serve as a model for social scientific research on apparitions. Claims of direct experience of the divine are extremely powerful and effective tools of argumentation and negotiation in the religious field, and a cognitive approach allows analysts to understand how many different types of powerful experiences come to be interpreted as religious. In this process institutionalization and organizational embracement is a crucial factor. The cognitive approach suggests that, purely on the personal level, experience is never religious. Those are the social institutions and organizations that create a religious field.

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Negotiating Marian Apparitions



“Taking as a starting point the messages of the Virgin Mary to two girls in 2002, the author makes extensive interviews with Greek Catholic clergy in Transcarpathia to provide a detailed panorama of an organization (the local eparchy) torn between closer ties with the Ukraine or closer ties with the Vatican, and the laity of region, torn between an identity as Ukrainian, or a more diffuse identity in keeping with the variety of ethnic groups in Transcarpathia. The book’s most original aspect is the application of anthropological methods to the study of clergy and diocesan organization, not just laity, and its engagement with theology and liturgy.”

William A. Christian Jr., author of *Divine Presence in Spain and Western Europe 1500–1960. Visions, Religious Images and Photographs* (CEU Press, 2012).

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